

Deal with Yeltsin to save economy

Gorbachev to put himself at voters' mercy

From Bruce Clark in Moscow

PRESIDENT Gorbachev yesterday announced a spectacular agreement under which the leaders of nine Soviet republics, including Boris Yeltsin of Russia, backed his efforts to save the country from social and economic collapse. In return, he effectively promised fresh nationwide elections this year, exposing himself to the risk of being voted out of office.

Mr Gorbachev went on to secure an early victory in his fight to retain the Communist party leadership when a key party meeting decided against holding an emergency debate on splitting the posts of president and general secretary. Critics also failed to make him account for his management of the party, another way of forcing him out of office.

In his opening address to the 400-strong central committee, Mr Gorbachev said that it was essential that he remained as both president and general secretary for now. He hailed as a "great achievement" the clinching of the

agreement on cooperation to rescue the economy, restore order and remake the Soviet Union as a looser association of states.

About 300,000 miners are on strike demanding Mr Gorbachev's resignation and wages linked with inflation. The strike, which began eight weeks ago in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, has spread to all of the country's main coalfields and forced scores of factories to cut production. Tens of thousands of factory workers have also resumed their strike in Minsk.

In their joint statement, Mr Gorbachev and the nine republican leaders called on workers "to end their economic and political strikes and try to make up for lost production as soon as possible". The statement said the country was being torn apart by ethnic unrest and strikes, fuelled by price increases. The economy was on the verge of collapse and there had been a paralysis of power as many of the union's 15 republics refused to follow central government orders.

The agreement proposed repealing the sales tax on some items, reducing air and train fares and linking salaries to price rises. But the leaders stopped short of endorsing Mr Gorbachev's call for a legal moratorium on rallies and strikes. Instead, they declared "intolerable any attempts to attain political ends through incitement to civil disobedience, strikes or calls for the overthrow of existing lawfully-elected state power bodies".

Mr Yeltsin's participation marked an impressive act of reconciliation with Mr Gorbachev, who in turn agreed that the Soviet constitution would be changed within six months of the signing of a union treaty, probably enhancing the power of the republics at the expense of central authorities. He also agreed to subsequent "election of the organs of Soviet power". That could mean either parliamentary or presidential elections, either of which could result in Mr Gorbachev's removal.

As Mr Gorbachev faced his toughest party plenum since

becoming general secretary in 1985, Tass acknowledged that calls for a change of leadership had been heard from all over the country, but it maintained that this was not a majority view. Spelling out the extent of opposition to Mr Gorbachev within the party, the agency said that communists from two southern Russian cities were demanding an emergency congress to change leader, while party activists in the Ukraine had censured him for failing to quell "criminal anti-socialist forces".

But in Leningrad, where there have been some of the loudest calls for a new party chief, only 12 of the 100 leading members finally voted to express no confidence in Mr Gorbachev. A Tass commentator declared that in spite of the thirst for revenge for lost power in the party's apparatus, "there are enough people in the CPSU who understand that the CPSU and the Soviet state need Gorbachev".

Even if Mr Gorbachev's headline opponents were to gain the upper hand at the central committee now meeting, the plenum could not itself remove the general secretary. It could, however, convene an extraordinary party congress empowered to change the leadership.

The meeting's official agenda covers "the state of the country". At yesterday's opening session, the prime minister, Valentin Pavlov, gave an account of the disastrous state of the economy, whose output has tumbled in the first quarter of this year to the levels of the mid-Seventies. He also outlined Mr Gorbachev's "anti-crisis" plan, which was approved by the Soviet parliament on Tuesday.

The nine republics that endorsed that plan yesterday will receive preferential economic treatment under a new union treaty. They agreed that the Baltic states, Moldavia, Georgia and Armenia should be free to choose not to sign, but that they should not benefit from favourable treatment.

Party bosses, page 8



Friendly zone: Royal Marines reassuring Kurdish villagers five miles inside Iraq that they are safe from President Saddam Hussein's army

Kurdish leaders sign pact with Saddam

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER in ZAKHO and MICHAEL EVANS in LONDON

A KURDISH rebel leader said yesterday that he had signed a deal with President Saddam Hussein on autonomy for Kurds in Iraq.

Jalal Talabani, who led a delegation to talks in Baghdad at the request of the government, said the pact was based on a 1970 agreement granting the 3.5 million Kurds autonomy in Kurdistan. Kurdish leaders have accused the Baghdad government of reneging on that agreement.

The announcement, attended by the Iraqi information minister, Hamid Youssef Humadi, came after five days of secret talks with senior Iraqi officials that were only officially unveiled yesterday with the Saddam meeting.

Refugees nevertheless continued to refuse to move from the mountain camps until armed Iraqis had gone from the northern town of Zakho. There was confusion over a reported Western ultimatum to Iraqi forces obstructing "safe havens", and Royal Marine commanders in the town were told to take "whatever steps are necessary" to remove the

threat to Kurdish refugees posed by the presence of 300 armed Iraqi "policemen".

Tom King, the defence secretary, revealed the warning as hundreds more armed Iraqis were reported to have arrived in Zakho. One British officer in the town was quoted as saying that the Iraqis had been given 48 hours to leave. But both the defence ministry in London and the Pentagon denied there was any deadline.

Nevertheless, Mr King indicated that the "problem of the armed Iraqis" had to be resolved very quickly.

Mr King did not detail the rules of engagement given to British commanders, but his remarks hinted that force could be used against the Iraqis as a last resort unless they left the area soon.

"They are clearly not there for traffic control and we're concerned to know who they really are," he said. "I hope we can resolve it by persuasion. The reality is that if we don't get the people down from the mountain many, many more will die. Our purpose there is not aggressive or bellicose but humanitarian."

We're desperate to save all the lives we can. We can organise tents and water but they are not going to be used unless the people feel safe enough. They have to feel secure. So anything we can legitimately demonstrate as being a cause of fear, we will have to deal with and very quickly. It's for the commanders on the ground to achieve that," Mr King added.

The armed Iraqis in Zakho are dressed in plain olive uniform and carrying firearms and Kalashnikov assault rifles. Residents say they are members of the Mukhabarat secret police. Terrified Kurdish residents said many of the "police" were changing into plainclothes so they could remain behind and intimidate people.

"You see that man" a civil servant asked, pointing to a tall Iraqi in a white shirt and grey slacks carrying a green plastic shopping bag. "He is a secret policeman from Baghdad. Yesterday I saw him in the same street in a green uniform and carrying a gun."

He added: "They watch us every minute, and at night

they break into our houses and steal our bread."

A Royal Marine nearby, patrolling Belfast-style, said of the Iraqi police: "They are going to leave. They can walk out, or they can go out in boxes."

Saddam's tactic of deploying the police has turned Zakho into a town of suspicion and fear. "If the Americans cannot convince us that the Iraqis have all gone, we shall walk back up the mountain," said a teacher who only returned home this week after ten nightmarish days with his five children in a mountain refuge. "Once the Americans and British go all the Kurds in Zakho will be dead," he said.

Tension escalated in Zakho when a big explosion rattled windows and sent a black plume of smoke hundreds of feet into the air. Iraqi "police", guns cocked, rushed to investigate. An American colonel explained that his troops had destroyed an Iraqi arms cache.

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Tories to demand notice of strikes

John Major has agreed that trade union reform should again be a central plank of the Conservative election campaign. Philip Webster reports

Trade unions would be required to give at least seven days' notice before calling strikes under a fresh package of reforms being drawn up by ministers. Unions in key public services may have to give at least a fortnight's advance warning.

Senior cabinet ministers say that the assault on union power may turn out to be the most lasting monument of the Thatcher decade and believe that it should be built upon.

The seven-day notice plan is among proposals, put forward by the secret Conservative manifesto group on employment, that are understood to be backed by Michael Howard, the employment secretary.

Others, following directly from the enquiry into the finances of the National Union of Mineworkers, will increase penalties against unions that fail to keep proper accounts and ensure new powers to union mem-

bers to be given automatically details of those accounts. The 14-day plan for essential service unions is more tentative but is being considered by Conservative policy-makers.

A statutory notice of strike action is certain to be bitterly opposed within the union movement as a fresh curb on workers' rights.

The notice would have to follow the ballots that unions are already required by law to hold before taking industrial action. Employers would be entitled to seek injunctions ordering unions to call off strike action if they failed to do so.

According to informed sources, the move is designed to prevent inconvenience to the users of essential and public services, such as has occurred in British Rail disputes and the strike on the London Underground in 1989. On that occasion unions de-

TODAY IN THE TIMES

FILMS

Meg Ryan plays Jim Morrison's girlfriend in *The Doors*: she was clearly more punch-bell than person, says Geoff Brown Page 13

COLUMN

Bernard Levin says that the Philadelphia Orchestra was founded by a man named Thunder. He would be thundering today, for certain Page 14

HEALTH

Mark Spitz and his ageing ilk show that there is no fighting the passing years, and not just among athletes. Dr Thomas Stuttard reports Page 11

IMF hope

International Monetary Fund economists suggest that Britain should cut the period that unemployment benefit is paid but say it should climb out of its recession Page 21

Arms plea

Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, today calls for compulsory registration of all substantial transfers of arms. In a letter to *The Times*, the Cardinal urges the creation of a moral climate in which arms sales would become unacceptable Page 15
Leading article, page 15

• There are 14 pages of top jobs in today's appointments section

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Manchester Games win

By JOHN GOODBODY, SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

MANCHESTER was yesterday nominated as Britain's candidate for the 2000 Olympic Games by the British Olympic Association (BOA). The city beat London by an unexpectedly wide margin of 28 votes to five.

Manchester will now be considered by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1993 to decide which city will stage the Games. Other candidates include Belgrade, Peking, Sydney and Berlin.

Although Manchester secured only five IOC votes in the second round of its attempt to stage the 1996 games, Bob Scott, the chairman of the Manchester team, told the British association that he hoped its members would regard the attempt as a good start rather than a failure. They agreed with his assessment.

Staging the 2000 Games in

northwest England will cost about £1 billion, but Manchester is confident that it can raise the private and public finance required. The city council is also prepared to underwrite the cost of the event. The London application, which was led by Sebastian Coe, was hampered by the absence of a strategic local authority to support the Games.

The British Olympic Association was told by its evaluation committee before it voted that although neither candidate was perfect, Manchester had more facilities built and the solidarity of local support. The London team would also have less time to prepare as they had to settle differences between two rival groups that wanted to stage the event. The association also felt that if the recession continues, the London proposals, which rested heavily on private investment, would



be more vulnerable than those put forward for Manchester. Mr Scott said afterwards that it was an "extraordinary" Continued on page 20, col 2

David Miller, page 32

Fat, happy and stirring up a radical storm

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT



Sharpton says that IRA among oppressed people

AS A man billed as the demagogue who could incite Britain's racial groups to riot, the Reverend Al Sharpton last night cut an unlikely figure. He chuckled as he described himself as black, fat and happy, a stark contrast to press notices which have said that the American black rights activist should be kept out of Britain because of his notoriety.

The 17-stone pentecostalist, who speaks in tongues, said last night: "I do not have a problem that I am fat. I am not a subject of interest because of my weight but because of my following and my politics." Reports this week have described him as a big, fat, greasy, rabble-rousing demagogue. He said: "Would you consider it a proper report if I called Winston Churchill a bald, fat, white slug?" Mr Sharpton, aged 36, is

reported to have inspired the character of the Reverend Reginald Bacon in Tom Wolfe's novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. He says his aim during his week in Britain, which begins when he flies in tomorrow, is not to inflame but to inspire. He described it as a fact-finding mission, expressing an interest in all the oppressed peoples of Britain, in which he included the IRA and all victims of racism. Murders which have already caught his eye include Broadwater Farm and a boy aged 15 stabbed to death by white youths.

To the fury of some in the American black establishment, he believes he is a "successfully refashioned Dr Martin Luther King". His speech is peppered with references to the famous: in addition to Sir Winston, he yesterday compared himself with Dr Billy Graham and the Rev Jesse Jackson. New York's black Mayor Dinkins, reportedly a

Sharpton antagonist, was first at his bedside when he survived a stabbing near the heart a few weeks ago. Mr Sharpton's religious credentials are good enough, in the pentecostalist tradition: he preached his first sermon at the age of four and was appointed a junior pastor of the Washington Temple Church of God in Christ when aged ten.

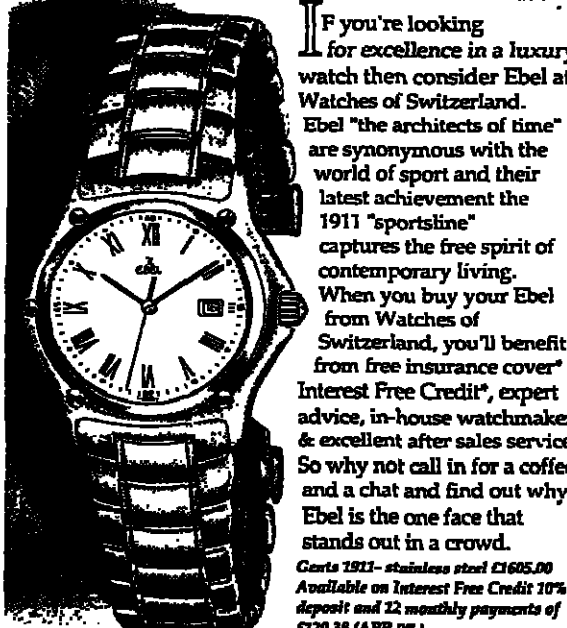
His mission to Britain begins with a book signing in Tottenham on Saturday, with his first sermon in southwest London on Sunday. He has yet to decide on his texts for the day: "I am ready to roll at church on Sunday. I am a pentecostalist that lets the Spirit lead me. I would consider myself a political activist to the left of centre. I do not consider myself radical. I am not advocating violence or anything but an equal system of justice for everyone."

US enquiry on Sununu flights

Theatre of rage, page 14

One face that stands out in the crowd

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Americans offer a deal in contest for tanks contract



Anders wrote to the prime minister

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

AN AMERICAN company has offered the prime minister a deal guaranteeing British companies a share in US overseas sales of ground combat systems in an attempt to win a tank contract for the British Army from Vickers.

The last-minute move by General Dynamics was made as the defence ministry was gearing up to announce the winner of the contract to replace the army's ageing Chieftain tanks. Vickers Defence System's Challenger 2 was reported to have been chosen. Now, one of the longest running equipment procurement debates is to enter yet another stage.

The appeal to John Major by William Anders, chief executive

of General Dynamics Corporation, in a letter dated April 12, has been backed by lobbying from other company executives who believe that their latest formula is in the best long-term interests of Britain and the US.

The defence ministry has denied reports that the tank contract decision was to be announced this week, but it is expected within the next two weeks. Now it is possible that the latest initiative from General Dynamics, which is offering its M1A2 Abrams, will prolong the agony for the Leeds-based British company, the country's sole tank manufacturer. The company has developed nine Challenger 2 prototypes.

Last week the defence ministry's equipment procurement committee met to make final recom-

mendations to the cabinet. But, according to ministry sources, the committee made no recommendation. Not for the first time, it just outlined the options.

Under the deal offered to Mr Major, General Dynamics has argued that the government should no longer merely focus on the single tank contract. The US company and Vickers Defence Systems had been asked to tender for an order that would amount to an initial batch of 127, 148 or 200 tanks at the rate of 32 a year, followed by a break in production which could last three years. The second phase envisaged an order for a further 200 tanks at the rate of 65 a year.

Yesterday Gordon England, vice-president and general manager of General Dynamics land

systems division, said his company had decided against tendering for this start-stop programme and instead was offering a long-term partnership with Britain to build not just its M1A2 Abrams tank but also howitzers and other ground combat equipment.

The defence ministry would be left to choose which companies joined in the partnership and in the case of the Chieftain replacement programme, British equipment and sub-systems, including items from Vickers' Challenger 2, could be added to the M1A2, "in a mix-and-match", if it was practical.

Throughout the tank saga, General Dynamics teams have made frequent high level visits to London to push their case for winning the contract. The latest, and presumably last, attempt to

swing the contract their way, was aimed at Downing Street, rather than the defence ministry, because, as Mr England put it: "We thought it should be on a chairman to chairman basis."

The section of the deal that the Americans hope will win them votes in the cabinet is the offer to share in overseas sales. Mr England, in London with a team including Michael Wasielewski, General Dynamics' managing director, and Henry Sechler, a vice-president, said Britain would get 15 per cent of every contract - 100 per cent in some countries where Britain has strong links - under the new arrangement, except for 465 Abrams tanks already ordered by Saudi Arabia.

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Changes in forensic science aid anger detectives

By CRAIG SETON

TRANSFORMATION of the Home Office's forensic science service to an agency that will charge forces for its work has led West Midlands police to stop sending some evidence for scientific analysis.

In future, the force will not send evidence to the forensic science service from cases such as criminal damage of less than £250 or non-injury traffic accidents that do not involve drink driving or other criminal offences. Some prosecutions for minor crime might be jeopardised, it fears.

The new guidelines have angered detectives who have come to expect that evidence gathered at crime scenes would be forwarded to the forensic science service for analysis to provide the best possible case for prosecution. Recorded crimes in the West Midlands increased by almost 16 per cent last year to 258,000 cases.

Dr Chris Fourweather, manager of the 140-strong West Midlands police scientific support unit, said yesterday that under the new arrangements for the forensic science service, the force had allocated £1.25 million this year for forensic science work, although he estimated it needed at least £1.6 million to pay the fees it would now be charged.

He said the forensic science service would charge about £160 for a typical item sent for analysis. Because of the funding shortfall, his unit would judge which items of evidence were worth having analysed.

All evidence found at a crime scene would still be gathered, but a judgment about which items were to be sent for analysis would be made by scenes of crime supervisors. There was a right of appeal to higher officers who could rule that evidence was worth scientific analysis.

Dr Fourweather said: "There is an element of risk. If we get it absolutely right, the number of cases that will slip through the net will be quite small, but it is frustrating for scenes of crime officers. It is not their natural inclination to gather evidence and then see it sitting idle. They did not have to worry about accountability bills before."

West Midlands scenes of crimes officers are expected to examine about 80,000 incidents this year. Dr Fourweather said he preferred the old system, whereby forensic science was funded through the common police services arrangement, under which the Home Office paid 51 per cent. "The agency might provide some accountability, but it puts us in the position where we have to become very much more cost conscious."

Major calls meeting on health of the nation

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE prime minister has summoned his health secretary and 20 prominent doctors and health chiefs to Chequers this weekend for a meeting about the health of the nation.

The aim is to transform health standards over the next decade, and those at the meeting will seek to draw up targets for creating a healthier population, and to find ways of translating these into national health service priorities and action plans.

The all-day gathering on Saturday is likely to lead to a national campaign to reduce deaths from the main killer diseases such as heart disease, cancer and strokes. Other changes are likely to include a bigger role for health education and a review of the GP contract, which already includes incentive payments for child immunisation, cervical cytology screening and health promotion clinics. According to some sources, however, the meeting is likely to be wary of interfering too directly in people's lives.

The meeting will focus on a health strategy green paper

being compiled by William Waldegrave, the health secretary, for publication next month. The document will try to shift the health debate on to new ground by moving it away from arguments about NHS structure, finance and management, and on to such questions as the purposes of the health service and how priorities should be set and achieved.

Mr Waldegrave believes that, with the health reforms now in place, he has a rare opportunity to shift public attention on to ways of propelling the country further up the international health league table. Presidents of the royal medical colleges, who have been critical of government health policy in the past, will join the meeting, along with leading figures from the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing, Sarah Hogg, the head of Downing Street's policy unit, and senior health department officials and NHS managers.

John Major has been taking a close interest in the drafting of the green paper, which he sees as playing a central role in his attempts to raise standards in public services in the Nineties. Last night, one Whitehall aide said the meeting should be seen in the context of Mr Major's crusade to improve the quality of people's lives over the next decade. Another senior government source said: "The prime minister is trying to get out of this what sort of health service we should be aiming for by the year 2000." The source added that the question of NHS funding would be bound to arise.

However, in an important break with the Thatcher era, Mr Major would not be exploring fundamental upheaval, such as a much bigger role for private health insurance or private hospitals. Instead, he would be consulting the experts on how the NHS should cope with rising expectations and demands and the pressures generated by ever-expanding medical technology.

Health, page 11



Senior service more than a dozen survivors from the Royal Navy submarine *Splendid*, sunk by a German destroyer in the Mediterranean on April 24, 1943, were reunited yesterday aboard HMS

Belfast in the Pool of London to mark the publication of *An Affair of Chances*, the war memoirs of their captain, Vice-Admiral Sir Ian McGeech. Sir Ian and 30 other members of the crew were rescued and

held prisoner in Italy. The book tells how Sir Ian escaped over the Alps into Switzerland, and then travelled to France where, with the help of the Resistance, he crossed into Spain before returning to Britain to resume

his duties. Guests at the reunion included Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewing, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fieldhouse, who was Flag Officer Submarines 1976-8, and Countess Mountbatten of Burma.

Hurd will hold talks in Kuwait

DOUGLAS Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, is to visit Kuwait and other Gulf states next week (John Winder writes).

He told the Commons during question time yesterday that he would discuss with Kuwait's new government allegations that Palestinians and others had been tortured by Kuwaitis. The claims were made in a report by Amnesty International, the human rights group. Mr Hurd said that the government was taking the report seriously.

He said that retaliation and disorder was understandable "for a time" after the Kuwaitis had been through. But when he visited Kuwait he hoped to reinforce the message about human rights that he had given to the Kuwaiti government.

Mr Hurd was replying to Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South East, who had asked for a government assessment of the Amnesty report, which said that Kuwaiti torturers had used electric shock, knives, whips, sulphuric acid, sexual assault and threats of execution on their victims.

Council seizes fishing fleet over debt

By PETER DAVENPORT

THIRTY trawlers, almost the entire fishing fleet operating out of the port of Sunderland, have been seized by the local council and issued with restraining orders preventing them putting to sea.

The action has been taken under a harbours, docks and piers Act of 1847 in a dispute over unpaid harbour fees totalling £26,000. Unless the fishermen agree within seven days to begin paying a charge they have consistently opposed, the vessels and their equipment can be sold off.

Yesterday the 30 trawlers, on which up to 90 men work, were tied up alongside the Sunderland fish quay while the fishermen consulted lawyers about seeking an injunction to prevent the council persisting with its enforcement action.

Fred Underwood, vice-chairman of the local fishermen's association, said: "We are not prepared to accept any of these alleged debts."

The argument has arisen over a £2.50 charge introduced by Sunderland borough council, the owners of the harbour, two years ago to increase income from the

fishing operations to help offset large losses on the port. Instead of introducing an annual levy, the council decided that a fee payable each time a vessel put to sea would be fairer and better geared towards the ability of individual fishermen to pay.

But the fishermen, who already pay harbour dues and other fees, refused to pay and the outstanding debt has steadily accumulated. They said yesterday that they had

offered to pay up to £12,000 towards the council's losses on the fish quay but that they wanted the new charge scrapped.

In spite of repeated warnings from the council, only seven members of the fleet agreed to pay their debts. When the remaining 30 boats returned to port on Tuesday the harbourmaster served notices of seizure and arrest, restraining the men from putting out to sea again. The

council said yesterday: "We have offered to let the men pay the money by instalments but they have still refused. We are under a legal obligation to collect the debt or face action from the district auditor."

Geoff Pearson, the solicitor for the fishermen's association, said that he would be seeking an injunction in the High Court in London later this week to prevent the council taking the enforcement action.

Opera house bounces back with new shows

A NOW-buoyant Royal Opera House has announced ten new operas for next season, five of them being produced by the company itself (Simon Tait writes).

Jeremy Isaacs, general director of the opera house, also announced ten new productions last year, but two had to be cancelled.

The opera house had been facing a deficit on the year of £1.9 million and an accumulated debt of more than £5 million. A year later, the

deficit has been held at under £2 million. Mr Isaacs said the shape of the new season of 22 operas was only possible because of the success of the royal opera last year in helping to retrieve the company's financial position through its performances.

The season has had to be altered slightly, however, because of the delay in the £200 million Covent Garden redevelopment plan, which was to have closed the opera house for three years starting in 1993 but will not start before 1996.

All's well that makes a profit

By SIMON TAIT
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE Prince of Wales's fears of a decline in the appreciation of Shakespeare have received confirmation from an unexpected source. The English Shakespeare Company plans to replace *All's Well That Ends Well* in its autumn season with a musical - less improving, perhaps, but a safer box-office bet.

Houses for the company's present West End season have fallen below 50 per cent, having been hit by the recession, the increase in value-added tax, and mixed reviews. By the time the season ends on May 11, the projected £40,000 profit will have dwindled to nothing.

At a meeting on Friday, Michael Bogdanov and Michael Pennington, the artistic directors, and John Blackmore, the executive producer, decided to bring forward plans to venture into musicals. The scheduled *All's Well That Ends Well* will be replaced by Bogdanov's own musical adaptation of Goethe's poem *Reynard the Fox*. That will tour with *The Tempest*.

Blackmore said: "The idea is to work it up for a Christmas show this year, partly because it is compatible with *All's Well* wasn't, but also because we need to make some money." Next year the company will produce a Dick Vosburgh/Frank Lazarus adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Hunting the Shark* and John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*.

The change of tack is doubly unfortunate because the company seemed to be fulfilling a vital role in supplying high-quality Shakespeare productions to the regions. Indeed, the company looks well placed to get its promotion to Arts Council "revenue client" status, putting it alongside flagships such as the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company, as the council's touring vessel.

PowerGen to cut 440 jobs

Power station trade unions have been told that 440 jobs are to be lost only hours after withdrawing their threat of industrial action in support of a pay claim. The jobs will be lost with the closure by PowerGen of Ferrybridge B, a 1,320 MW station in West Yorkshire, and Hams Hall C, in Warwickshire, in November next year.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union said that they were concerned by the closure statement and its timing. The company said that some staff would be offered jobs elsewhere and other jobs would be lost through natural wastage and voluntary redundancy.

Mines decision

Britain's last two working tin mines were closed in February with the loss of 400 jobs because the US has a large stockpile. John Major yesterday told Doris Ansari, a Cornwall county councillor, in a letter. Closure of Wheal Jane and South Crofty mines was announced by Carnon Consolidated after the government withheld the final £1.6 million of £24 million in aid because the mines were not viable.

DIY store fined

B & Q, the DIY chain, was fined £1,850 by Cheltenham magistrates yesterday for eight offences of overcharging customers. Trading standards officers checked prices after a complaint from a customer charged £2 more for an item than the displayed price. They found that 35 of the items were priced at 50p more and a saw blade costing an extra £1.99.

Justice The Times reports that a 50p fine was imposed on B & Q for each of the eight offences. The total fine was £1,850. The offences were: overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items, overcharging for 35 items.

One in two endorses PR, opinion poll shows

By ROBIN OAKLEY
POLITICAL EDITOR

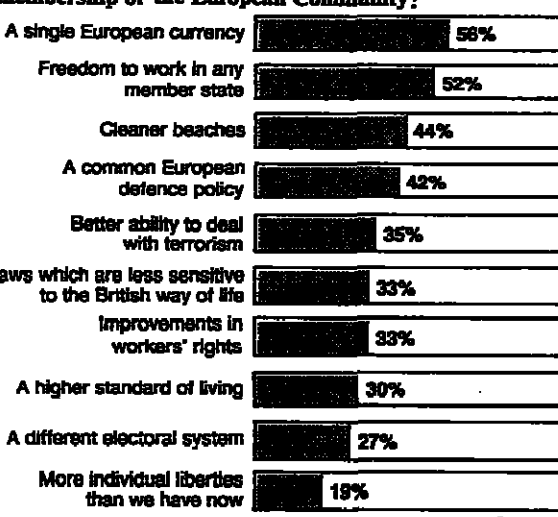
THE British people would like to see significant changes in the constitution and electoral system, including more use of referendums, legal limits on election spending by political parties, fixed-term parliaments and a bill of rights.

Half the public is in favour of proportional representation, according to an opinion survey by Mori for the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust report on *The State of the Nation 1991*.

The survey is likely to give a big jolt to Labour's study on electoral reform. Not only does the public back PR by 50 per cent to 23 per cent but Labour supporters are nearly three to one in favour of it. Robin Cook, for the party, said yesterday: "Labour cannot go on turning a deaf ear when the polls tell us our people want PR."

Nearly two-thirds of those questioned in one of the biggest constitutional studies believe the present system of governing Britain needs improvement. A freedom of information act is favoured by a margin of 11 to one (77 per cent to 7 per cent) and six to one (72/11) favour a bill of rights. There is a boost for John Major's consensual style with two to one in favour of

Q Which of these, if any, do you think are likely to happen in the next ten years as a result of our membership of the European Community?



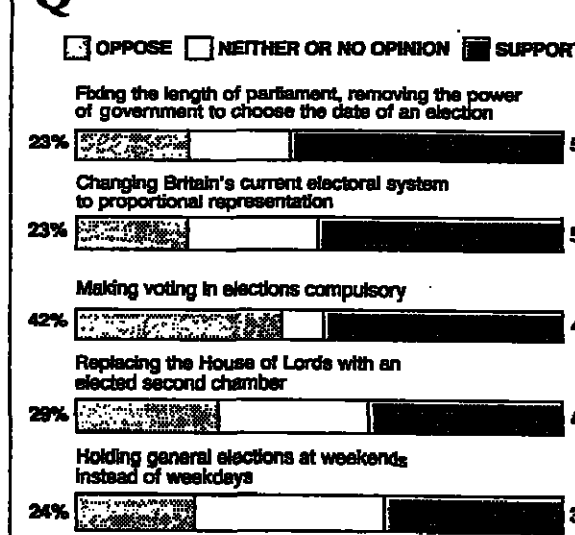
more inter-party co-operation. Although most people (59 per cent) think that parliament works well, three to one (72/20) favour the use of a referendum to decide important issues.

The growing impact of the European Community is demonstrated by 56 per cent believing that a single European currency is likely in the next ten years and 42 per cent believing there will be a common European defence policy in that time span. A set

limit to the amount of money political parties could spend nationally at a general election was favoured by 81 per cent, with only 14 per cent against the idea. While 46 per cent overall supported the idea of a ban on trade union contributions to party election funds, 43 per cent opposed the ban. Trade union members were evenly split at 47 per cent.

Conservatives 51:40 in favour of a ban and Labour supporters 54:34 against one. There was a similar picture

Q Do you support or oppose:



on company contributions with 44 per cent wanting them banned and 45 per cent against the idea. Conservatives were 53:39 against a ban, Labour supporters 44:43 in favour and Liberal Democrats, who have the weakest funding, 58:36 against.

There is significant support for a Scottish parliament. Fifty-one per cent of a sample of 612 questioned in Scotland said that Scotland should remain part of the UK with a devolved assembly enjoying

tax and spending powers. In a finding which will dismay the Liberal Democrats the idea of giving greater government powers to Wales was opposed 42 per cent to 40.

Mr Mori interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,034 adults aged 18 plus face to face in 146 constituencies from March 7-25. Data were weighted by sex, work status and class. In Scotland an additional 513 adults were interviewed in 34 constituencies.

Saund early of pre-deme

By PAUL A

The prime minister's health secretary, William Waldegrave, has been criticised for his handling of the health service. The criticism is based on the fact that the health service is in a state of crisis and the government is not doing enough to address the problem.

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Saunders 'in early stages of pre-senile dementia'

By PAUL WILKINSON

ERNEST Saunders, the jailed former chairman of the Guinness Group, is suffering the early stages of pre-senile dementia and was probably already affected by it when his trial began last spring, the Court of Appeal in London was told yesterday.

Saunders, aged 55, is appealing against his conviction and five-year sentence for fraud, theft and false accounting during his company's takeover of Distillers in 1987. He has been told his condition is progressive and incurable, the court was told by Antony Shaw, his counsel. That was relevant to his sentence, Mr Shaw said.

Dr Patrick Gailwey, a forensic psychiatrist who examined Saunders earlier this month, said there had been a marked change since last seeing him in February 1988. All the symp-



Saunders, clearly unwell, arrives at court yesterday.

ptoms now pointed to an Alzheimer's disease-type disorder, he said.

A psychiatrist who examined Saunders three weeks before the trial had not detected the illness, but Dr Gailwey said he would not have been looking for such a condition. "Everybody was lulled into a false sense of security because he had a long history of memory difficulties. I would have thought that it is very probable that this disorder was working its insidious process during that period."

The doctor said that, in February 1988, Saunders had complained to him of depression and anxiety going back to before the Distillers takeover, but by last month there was evidence of "organic degeneration". During the examination, Saunders was often lost for words, was unable to count four numbers backwards and showed a lack

of concentration. He had difficulty reading textbooks on marketing, his specialist subject, and he had lost his way on leaving the interview. Saunders was allowed to leave the court while details of his mental state were discussed.

His condition was first detected earlier this year after he was admitted to hospital for a hernia operation, Mr Shaw said. He had complained of persistent headaches and a brain scan showed abnormalities in his frontal lobes. A consultant neurologist subsequently diagnosed pre-senile dementia.

John Chadwick, QC, the Crown counsel who successfully prosecuted Saunders last year, said he did not oppose the suggestion that dementia might be the final diagnosis, but contended there was insufficient evidence as yet to reach that conclusion.

Dr Gailwey said the illness would become more obvious as time passed. "The treatment that would be most beneficial would be not in prison but in his own home," he said.

Dr William Gooddy, consultant neurologist at the Edward VII hospital in Midhurst, West Sussex, said that when he interviewed Saunders at the height of the Gulf war, he was unable to name the American president. Dr Gooddy produced a set of brain scan pictures and pointed out physical changes in the brain's make-up. "There is no question in my mind that Ernest Saunders is suffering significant structural cerebral damage," he said.

Dr Owen Lloyd, the medical officer at Ford open prison, where Saunders is serving his sentence, said he had been surprised at Saunders' condition when he saw him last November. "I found him to be slow in manner, much older than he really was and repetitive."

Dr George Perkin, consultant neurologist at the Charing Cross hospital, north London, who was called for the prosecution, said he could not accept the diagnoses without further psychological testing and analysis.

Gerald Ronson, the head of the Heron group of companies, who was fined £5 million and jailed for a year, and Anthony Parnes, a stockbroker, who was jailed for two-and-a-half years, are also appealing against their convictions and sentences.

The appeals continue today.



TONY WHITE

BA pilot 'flew too close' to jet in fog

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

THE British Airways jumbo jet which narrowly missed buildings north of Heathrow airport in to land at less than the minimum distance recommended under rules laid down in an air traffic control "bible", a court was told yesterday.

Michael Holdstock, air traffic controller, told Isleworth crown court in west London that a minimum of six miles between aircraft was normally required for landing in bad weather but that there was only five miles between the Boeing 747 flown by Captain William Glen Stewart and an Air France jet which landed ahead of him.

He agreed with Patrick Phillips, QC, defending Captain Stewart, that if a plane was still on the runway when another tried to land, the beam indicating the centre-line of the runway could be "bent" because of interference from it.

On the second day of the trial of Captain Stewart, accused of negligence in endangering both his aircraft and people on the ground, the jury was also told that half the high intensity lights specially lit to guide aircraft on to the runway in bad visibility might have been out of action shortly before his landing. Captain Stewart, of Wokingham, Berkshire, denies the charges.

The court - which is directly under the same flight path flown by Captain Stewart in the near-disaster in November 1989 - heard that the jumbo, call-sign Speedbird 12, first contacted Mr Holdstock on duty in the tower at Heathrow when it was seven miles from touchdown.

Just over a mile from touchdown Mr Holdstock said he told Speedbird 12 that it was clear to land, and heard nothing for 31 seconds until the British Airways jet's crew reported that they were "going around". Cloud cover was described as thick at 200ft.

The hearing continues today.

Bowled over: things are looking up for the girls in the Roodean cricket team (David Tytler writes). They are no longer restricted to games against teams from banks, pubs and nightclubs. The first team's batting and bowling averages will actually appear in next year's *Wisden*, essential reading for all serious cricketers but until now closed to teams from girls' schools. Even their headmistress is prepared to play against them.

Six years ago, when Ann Longley

was appointed head mistress from a school in California, she was not keen on cricket and questioned whether the game that the school has played since the early 1900s should survive. Each of the four houses now has a team, the school regularly fields three teams and Mrs Longley plays in the staff side, which lost last year.

Andrew England, the chemistry teacher who organises the school fixtures, said: "Our problem had been to find teams to play against but more

girls' schools are now playing and we have regular fixtures with nine of them and a boys' prep school. Three local schools have also said they would like to play against us."

The school submitted its averages last year to *Wisden*, but they arrived too late for inclusion. However, Graeme Wright, the editor, has said that he hopes that next year the 129th edition of the cricketer's bible could have the Roodean batting averages alongside those of Eton and Harrow.

Making light of 500,000 injuries

By ROBIN YOUNG

HALF a million people a year are injured through slipping, tripping or falling, a conference in London was told yesterday, yet most people make light of the risks and most such accidents go unreported.

The consequences can be serious, according to some speakers at the international conference, organised yesterday at the Royal College of Surgeons by the Medical Commission on Accident Prevention and Surrey university's Robens Institute of Health and Safety.

Construction workers stand a one-in-500 chance of falling to their deaths if they stay at the job throughout their working lives.

Falls are a major cause of injuries and absence from work among public administration and food and drink industry workers as well as miners, railwaymen and postal workers.

Dr Jane Fothergill, of the accident department at Mayday hospital in Croydon, Surrey, said: "Quite a simple fall or fracture can cause a complete lack of confidence and leave people housebound for fear of falling again for the rest of their lives."

Dr Fothergill and her colleagues surveyed 237 of their patients, and found that two-thirds had fallen on pavements and another tenth while crossing roads. Uneven surfaces were blamed in half of the cases.

Leading article, page 15

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How to go round the houses and return with the rates

MICHAEL Heseltine has proposed to reintroduce a local domestic property tax. Although it is to be called "council tax", the new levy is a very close relative of the old rating system. Indeed, we appear to have returned to a world where both the major political parties are offering to finance part of local government with something like the old rates.

The plans unveiled on Tuesday are a long way from the ideas which had, over many weeks, been regularly leaked through the columns of the newspapers. Early options had included a property tax with a flat rate add-on for all adults; a property tax which assumed add-ons for households with two or three-plus adults;

then, latterly, a property tax with discount for single adult households.

A single adult discount model was finally selected. Debates about the base for the property tax were also published widely in the media. Rental values, capital values, floor space, rebuilding costs and "banding" were all suggested. The government has decided to go for capital values within seven bands.

The process of getting from the old rating system via the community charge back to a domestic property tax has been long, painful and expensive. The Cabinet, Parliament, Whitehall and local councils have had to spend stupendous amounts of time

Commentary

Tony Travers

inventing things, arguing about them, attempting to implement them, constructing short-term palliatives and, finally, thinking up a way of getting back to square one.

The more recent process of whittling down the available options to the one preferred by the government has relied heavily on a continuous process of leaking in the newspapers, followed by a period of reaction among MPs, local authorities and others. This

operation has allowed ministers to gauge reaction and to change their views accordingly. Some of the details released must have strengthened Mr Heseltine's hand in the attempt to move as far as possible away from a poll tax.

Accusations that an add-on for all householders (or even a graduated tax for one, two and three-adult households) would be little more than a disguised poll tax clearly allowed the environment secretary to argue with his colleagues that only the smallest hint of the community charge should remain.

In the end, the exposure of options in the newspapers allowed the desire of the electorate to be rid of a flat rate poll tax to be

brought to bear on those backbenchers who wanted to keep strong elements of the community charge. Opinion polls have long been clear: for most people, the poll tax had to go.

Both the government and the Opposition have argued that the new council tax is not simply the old rating system reborn. Mr Heseltine's consultative document argued that his new tax will overcome those aspects of both rates and community charge which were most criticised. The Opposition claims that the new tax still has — in the discount for single householders — elements of poll tax and that banding will ensure that the largest properties pay only modest amounts of tax.

During the process of consultation from now until mid-June, pressures will be brought to bear on the single adult discount. The Opposition may be able to convince the electorate that even this discount is a relative of the poll tax. Mr Heseltine may yet abandon this final vestige of the community charge.

Regardless of what the politicians say, the council tax (and for that matter Labour's "Fair Rates") has moved us a long way back towards the rating system which was scrapped so recently. Britain will soon have a local domestic property tax once again. Tony Travers is director of the Greater London Group at the London School of Economics.

Cottages and mansions share bands in South

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERIAL hopes that the council tax will mean wealthy occupants of expensive homes paying more than their poorer neighbours appear likely to go unfulfilled in some parts of the country. The choice of seven bands based on property prices as the basis for levying the new tax will mean that in the South some owners of mansions will pay the same as people who live on housing estates.

At one stage, the cabinet considered adopting a banding system based on the size of properties and the idea of designating the top bracket as the "mansion class" was discussed. In the event, the system announced on Tuesday by Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, uses price bands set nationally, the highest of which encompasses all homes worth more than £160,000.

Although in some parts of the country properties will spread evenly through the new bands, in the South houses will be grouped in the upper reaches. In south Buckinghamshire 41 per cent of homes are in the top bracket. Deeper into the Chil-

terns at West Wycombe, Sir Francis Dashwood, the premier baronet of Great Britain, finds himself grouped with many cottage residents in the village at the gates of his drive.

West Wycombe Park, 18th-century home to the first Sir Francis and his heirs, now belongs to the National Trust, as do most of the houses in the village. Although lorries on the A40 pass within feet of their front doors the cottages are much sought after and the few still in private hands fetch close to £200,000 each.

Sir Francis said: "I must say it does seem unfair that I'll be paying the same as the people in the village. It is a relief, though, that we will not be going back to the rates, which used to be more than £2,000."

"I thought the poll tax was very unfair and I agreed with the villagers who thought it was wrong that they were being asked to pay the same as me. It appears that situation will continue. It really does make one question the fairness of the system if Blenheim Palace is going to pay the same tax as some of the people living in the village here."

Ian and Gillian Aldridge live in a 16th-century, three-bedroom cottage close to the park gates. They rent their home from the National Trust, but it is worth more than £160,000.

Mrs Aldridge, who is clerk of the parish council, said: "I don't think it's a very fair system if we have to pay the same as Sir Francis. We've got two children to look after and he hasn't."

Mr Aldridge, a fireman, said that he would consider appealing if his home was officially valued as being in band G, the highest of the seven. "In another part of the country we would be in a much lower band. We're having to pay as much as Sir Francis just because of where we live," he said.

The vagaries of the property market will ensure that prices in West Wycombe, which is on the western fringe of High Wycombe, will remain high, according to Andrew Fraser, manager of the Wycombe branch of Woolwich property services. "Before the slump prices here were rising steadily at 10 to 12 per cent a year and I think we'll go back to something like that soon. You would be hard put to find a property in West Wycombe now under £150,000," he said.

Heseltine 'needs to tighten capping'

TOUGH new capping rules will be needed if the government is to ensure that the council tax is levied at the kind of levels promised by Michael Heseltine, local government finance officers said yesterday (Douglas Broom writes).

They said that there would need to be more cuts in services to achieve the levels set out by the government. Ministers would also need to uprate grants to councils, in line with inflation over the next two years, to be certain that councils stick to the tax levels announced on Tuesday when the first bills go out in April 1993.

These range from under £100 for the cheapest property in Wales and up to £1,692 for the most expensive home in Barrow-in-Furness, where the tax is inflated by the local council's overspending.

The introduction of the community charge was marred by the fact that councils exceeded government targets by up to 40 per cent, pushing average bills to almost £280, £100 higher than government predictions.

Under the new system, overspending will result in even sharper rises in bills than under the poll tax. With government grants and business rate now fixed centrally, councils have to raise all extra spending through local tax.

When it was introduced, the community charge accounted for a third of council income, which meant that a 1 per cent rise in spending above target increased bills by 3 per cent. The new council tax will raise 22 per cent of income, so a 1 per cent increase in budget above target would result in a 4.5 per cent increase in council tax.

Martin Pilgrim, finance officer of the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "For every £100 a council spends within its targets £78 comes from the government and £22 from local tax. If you want to spend an extra £10 it all has to come from the local tax, which then goes up to £32. The gearing effect is even more severe than it was under poll tax."



Some mistake, surely: a slogan serves only to muddy the waters as Labour's John Cunningham (left) and Bryan Gould put on their most serious faces yesterday at a press briefing called to ridicule the Tories' council tax. The full slogan reads: "Conservatives cost you more"

Man in the News

Rising star could fall with poll tax

IF A week is a long time in politics, the past six months must have seemed like an eternity for the man charged by Margaret Thatcher with handling the poll tax (Richard Ford writes).

As Michael Heseltine unveiled the government's new property based council tax, Michael Portillo, aged 37, sat expressionless alongside him on the front bench. An ambitious right-winger he has been given the job of selling the poll tax to the electorate but instead he has helped the demise of the flagship of Mrs Thatcher's third term.

His public relations efforts were loud and extravagant as befitted a Thatcherite MP who was rising fast under the former prime minister. At the Tory party conference last year the MP for Enfield Southgate, described the community charge as "courageous, fair and sensible" and "a vote-winner".

Because of his pronouncements, ministers expect that Mr Portillo, the son of a Spanish republican academic, will no longer be at the environment department

when legislation for the new tax comes before parliament.

But Mr Portillo, educated at Harrow County Grammar and Peterhouse, Cambridge, remains one of the party's brightest stars. He has risen swiftly since becoming an MP seven years ago. Within two years of winning the by-election caused by the Sir Anthony Berry's death in the Brighton bombing, he was an assistant whip, moving on to under-secretary at social security, minister of state at transport and environment.



Portillo: described the poll tax as a vote-winner

Town facing job losses gets top council tax in England

By RONALD FAUX

ALREADY shaken by the news that up to 5,000 jobs are to go at the Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering nuclear submarine yard, the residents of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, yesterday learnt that the town is to pay the highest council tax in England.

Top-band property valued at more than £160,000 will produce a tax of £1,192. At the lower end of the scale, a couple in a terraced house worth £40,000 will pay £477. Local people were quick to point out yesterday that that compares badly with the £227 to be paid by a couple living in the most expensive house in Westminster.

The high-spending record of the Labour-controlled council in Barrow set against the generally low value of property was blamed for the anomaly of an economically hard-hit town suffering the highest level of tax. Ted Smith, leader of the Conservative group on Barrow council, said that the town spent more than £10 million against the government standard assessment of just over £6 million. Barrow escaped being charge-capped because of the £15 million

minimum set by the government, below which a council would not be capped.

"Our spending went from £6.3 million to £10.8 million in the space of two years," he said. "Although the poll tax has been blamed for a lot of things, and it was a disaster, this is a clear case of overspending."

He added: "A lot has still to be discussed about this new charge and, at the end of the day, I would hope there will be not much difference to ordinary householders."

Labour rules the council with a strong majority, although Barrow's heavy reliance on defence orders has resulted in some political pragmatism when selecting its MP. Labour's commitment to scrapping the Trident programme, upon which the Barrow economy is balanced, ensured success for Cecil Franks, Tory MP for Barrow and Furness, who also blamed the council's high spending for the high level of council tax.

He said that households face bills which are £210 more than they should be. Barrow's rate of spending was 68.3 per cent above the government's

average figures: the highest in Cumbria and fourth highest in the land.

In the town's Conservative club, Tory supporters hoped the government had not shot itself in the other foot with the new scheme. "The evidence is clear that this is the council's fault but will they be able to pin that on them convincingly this time?" one asked.

Barrow has a high proportion of owner-occupied housing with a relatively low value. Many Victorian terrace houses would hardly notice the difference between the council tax and the poll tax, and the exemptions for those in difficult circumstances had removed a lot of the resentment felt towards the community charge.

How the top end of the market feels about the new tax levels is more difficult to judge. "We don't have a lot of property in Barrow that comes into the £160,000-plus bracket," one estate agent said.

Many people had not heard that they lived in the country's highest-rated town. Those who were told of it agreed that it was something they could do without.

Private and public surveyors will value properties

By CHRISTOPHER WARMAN, PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

THE task of valuing each property for the new council tax will be led by Rex Shuter, the inland revenue's chief valuer, who has 1,775 qualified valuers and a total staff of about 6,000 in the valuation office and its 120 district offices in England and Wales. They will be joined by chartered surveyors and qualified valuers from the private sector, paid for by the government.

The valuation office, responsible for some 20 million properties in England and Wales, said yesterday that not every property will have to be inspected. "Many will be able to be put into the seven bands either without an inspection or with an external inspection. Only a small number will have to be looked at internally," a spokesman said.

The district offices will base their valuations on information from their database covering most properties, with details from the last revaluation in 1973 carried out under the old rating system using rental values. In addition, the offices are notified of all sales of property that is freehold or has a lease of more than seven years. The offices have also carried out the valuation of up to a million council houses purchased under the "right to buy" provisions since 1980, giving them information on public sector properties.

Michael Pattison, secretary general of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, which has members in the valuation office and the private sector, said the need to value all the properties was a massive undertaking. "The banding system should simplify the valuation process and so enable it to be carried out more speedily," he said. "If they get cracking, they will be able to get it into place by April 1993."

He said there were very large areas of housing where it was quite clear to valuation officers and to the occupiers that the properties fell into the middle of a band. "I believe that 85-90 per cent of the properties can be allocated to a band quickly."

There could also be a "beacon" system of valuation under which a typical property would be chosen as the basis of valuation for similar properties in the same area, he added. That method would be a rough-and-ready means of valuation, so a right of appeal would be vital. There must also be scope for an occupier to ask for an individual assessment.

Stafford Taylor, a partner in Building Surveying Associates, a chartered surveyors' firm, said the need to value all properties could generate a workload boom for valuation surveyors. "There are currently about 20 million homes in the UK. There could therefore be a colossal amount of work for surveyors over the next two years." He estimated that the cost of the valuations, at about £100 each, could be in the region of £2 billion.

Band switch unlikely for extensions

EXTENSIONS and small home improvements are unlikely to push up the council tax for homeowners, because the government wants to avoid costly and frequent revaluations (Ray Clancy writes).

Although councils and other interested parties can express their views in a consultation period, the government paper produced suggests that there would be no need for regular or frequent revaluations under the banding system.

Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, believes that because the bands are broad, property improvements would not necessarily lead to a band change. "Of course, in some cases, notably where an extension has been built, the value of a property could rise considerably. This is one of the issues that will be discussed during the consultation period," said an environment department spokeswoman.

The government's favoured option is for alterations — anything from installing central heating to a two-bedroom extension — to be taken into account when a property is sold. Another would be for revaluations to be carried out when planning permission is given and in areas where, for example, major roads that might affect property prices were being planned.

Hostage release crucial

The release of the 10 British hostages held in Lebanon is a top priority for the British government. The Prime Minister, Mr. Thatcher, has made it clear that the release of the hostages is a condition for any further negotiations with the PLO. The British government is working closely with the United States and other allies to ensure the safe release of the hostages.

Water claim rejected

The claim that the British government is planning to build a new water supply system for the Middle East has been rejected. The government has stated that it has no plans to build such a system at this time.

Long shot

The chances of a British-led coalition to fight the Gulf crisis are seen as a long shot. The British government is currently focused on diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

Carey in Lords

The Earl of Carey has been appointed to the House of Lords. He will be representing the Conservative Party.

Parliament today

Parliament will meet today to discuss the government's response to the Gulf crisis. The Prime Minister will deliver a speech to the House of Commons.

World's top community

The World's Top Community award has been won by the town of Barrow-in-Furness. The town was praised for its strong sense of community and its efforts to improve the lives of its residents.

Lord Prior

Lord Prior has been appointed to the House of Lords. He will be representing the Conservative Party.

Frances David: in search of support worthy of Henry V

Frances David, the Conservative MP for Barrow-in-Furness, is seeking support from her constituents. She has been working hard to improve the town's infrastructure and to create jobs.



Hostage release crucial

The overriding importance of the release of British hostages in Lebanon to the improvement of relations between Britain and Iran was emphasised several times by Douglas Hogg, Foreign Office minister of state, during Commons question time.

He said that no item on the agenda was more important. "We have taken every opportunity ourselves and through our friends to impress on Iran the fundamental importance of getting our hostages out."

Water claim rejected

The government has rejected Labour allegations that it is allowing water companies to relax the standards laid down for drinking water. In a Commons written reply, Tony Baldry, environment minister, said that the secretary of state had not entered into any agreements for the relaxation of standards.

Long shot

Andrew Barnett, adopted yesterday as the Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for one of the safest Labour seats in the country, Glasgow, Springburn, claims, at 23, to be the youngest general election candidate so far selected.

Carey in Lords

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, was introduced in the House of Lords to cheers from all sides.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Home Office; prime minister. Natural heritage (Scotland) bill, remaining stages.
Lords (3): Child support bill, report.

Labour ready to ditch rebel council leader

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour leadership has ordered its councillors at Lambeth in south London to a meeting at which they will be expected to ditch their rebel leader, Joan Twelves.

At the same time, it gave notice yesterday of its intention to bring charges against Ms Twelves and her 12 suspended colleagues that could result in their expulsion from the party.

Labour's ruling body reaffirmed its decision to suspend the "Lambeth 13" for continual breaches of the rules of the party. The other 27 Labour councillors have been instructed to write to the chief executive of the council indicating that they are members of the "group of 27" and therefore approved by the national leadership.

That decision was denounced by the far left at yesterday's meeting of the national executive. Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn said the 27 were being ordered to sign a loyalty oath.

The 13 are being investigated by party officers for persistent breaches of party discipline and the party whip in Lambeth. After the NEC meeting a party official said: "The NEC is conducting its investigation, but agreed to consider drawing up charges to go to the national constitutional committee at a future meeting".

The constitutional committee deals with disciplinary matters and the councillors could face expulsion from the party. The 13 councillors have landed in trouble with party headquarters for a series of decisions, including failing to set a budget, refusing to implement the poll tax and holding a debate to oppose the Gulf war. The leadership is taking a tough line because of fears of the "loony left" tag being revived by the Conservatives during the local election campaign.

The NEC decided to convene the annual meeting of the Lambeth Labour group on

May 13. Senior party officials will be present and the councillors will be asked to elect a new leader. The next step would be for that new leader to be nominated on the floor of the council as the new council leader.

Until the councillors are expelled or resign they are members of the Labour party and Labour councillors, but they are not members of the official Labour group on the council.

The NEC was also given a strong warning by Larry Whitty, party general secretary, about the party's finances. Although the position has improved, it is still about £400,000 in deficit. Mr Whitty and members of the executive voiced unhappiness about the operation of the new national computerised membership scheme under which people can join and subscribe to the party nationally. They are worried about excessive bureaucracy in the scheme.



Back to school: Norma Major, who joined children from Houghton primary school at a chemical industry careers seminar yesterday

Mayhew rejects ministers' war crimes assertion

By PETER MULLIGAN

THE government was challenged in the Lords yesterday over its assertion that Nazi war crime trials had not been held in Britain in the past because suspects had not been thought to be resident here.

Lord Mayhew, the Liberal Democrat, a former foreign office minister, told peers at question time that the cabinet had discussed in 1945 how best to deal with suspects discovered in this country.

His disclosure comes as the government prepares to reintroduce its war crimes bill in the Lords next week after seeing it resoundingly rejected there in the last parliamentary session. Ministers have made clear that they will use the parliament acts to insist on the legislation going through if peers once again defeat it.

MPs have passed the measure. Lord Mayhew said that, as a junior minister, he had answered questions about a suspect who had been arrested, and the case had been considered by the then home secretary, foreign secretary and Lord Chancellor. Why, he asked, did ministers now try to maintain that "unawareness" was the reason legisla-

tion had not been passed to try such suspects resident in this country. "I am not relying on my memory or my opinion but on the records at the time", he told peers. The cabinet had concerned itself with deportation of suspected war criminals held here.

Earl Ferrers, the Home Office minister, insisted that the cabinet meeting in question had discussed trials for war crimes in continental Europe. He said there had been no question of possible war trials in this country because war criminals were not believed to be resident and added to murmurs of assent: "Even if that were proven to be wrong, there is no particular reason why later on a government should take a different decision from that arrived at in 1948".

However, in exchanges indicative of the strength of feeling, Lord Mayhew said: "The government decision to end trials and wind up the process of retribution applied to all suspects in British or British-controlled territories. The war crimes bill is a direct reversal of the government decision in 1948."

Worlds that must communicate

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

A NEW plea for better paid MPs came this month from the former cabinet minister Lord Prior.

An MP's job is now full time, he told a Commons dinner, and no longer a suitable part-time occupation for a man of business. Parliament, meanwhile, was now "a regrettable exercise in how to help industry" and could not function adequately unless it had a greater knowledge of industry.

In boardrooms and in Whitehall there is concern about the problem. Not that it is new. Back in March 1979 the Hansard Society produced a report, *Politics and Industry - the*

bers to the Commons. Instead it uses consultants and government affairs specialists.

A discussion paper from the Industry and Parliament Trust, which does valiant work attaching MPs on fellowships to companies and drafting businessmen into Parliament on study programmes to observe its arcane workings, said in 1987 that selection committees tended to require local government experience in parliamentary candidates. But the increasing politicisation of local government had made it harder to involve those in industry.

Analysis of the 130 MPs elected in 1987 showed that only 21 per cent could be said to have made their living in any sense from business. Among industrialists asked about employees with political ambitions "all, without exception, believed local or national political involvement would be regarded in their company as a major handicap to their career development".

When the trust surveyed attitudes among member companies (with about 2.5 million employees) to community involvement for last year's commission on citizenship it emerged that companies welcomed the idea of participation by their rising stars in, say, the Territorial Army or school governorships but saw political interests as detrimental to a career.

What the Industry and Parliament Trust is now promoting, however, is the idea of a model corporate policy taken from a Canadian model and designed to change company attitudes. The Canadian scheme makes provision for pension rights to continue during parliamentary service and guarantees the employee's right to return at least to the level at which he left. If such a plan were adopted, electors would have to accept the notion of shorter-term parliamentary careers, the benefit would be better dialogue between two worlds that seem to find it so hard to communicate.



Lord Prior

Great Mismatch. It spoke of the contempt of the business community for the apparent instability of Westminster thanks to the adversarial system of politics, of the difference in lead times in implementing political and business decisions and of the hampering of investment and economic progress by the lack of communication between the two worlds.

In 1977 the CBI set up a working party on parliamentary candidates from business and industry.

The position has worsened rather than improved. The average business has to keep track of at least a hundred pieces of legislation to remain on the right side of the law. But, like other powerful groups in society, industry is showing less interest in electing its leading mem-

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Private and public surveyors will value properties

Hard switch unlikely for extension

Police Complaints Authority annual report

Reduced proof level sought for hearings

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A TWO-TIER system for hearing complaints against the police using a reduced burden of proof for minor matters, the creation of independent disciplinary tribunals to hear serious allegations, and public access to the tribunals' work was urged yesterday by the Police Complaints Authority.

The proposals, described in a triennial overview of the authority's work and its 1990 report, both published yesterday, would give the authority radical powers, taking its role beyond acting as a supervisory body for the complaints system. The authority would no longer have a member sitting on disciplinary tribunals but instead frame or approve charges for tribunals, decide whether officers should have legal representation and present cases against officers.

Police reaction last night included a rebuke from chief constables and outright opposition from the Police Federation, representing the junior ranks. The federation wants investigation of complaints taken away from police completely. Alan Eastwood, chairman of the federation, said the two-tier system had operated in Northern Ireland but not always with success.

Judge Petre, the authority's chairman, said the authority was calling on the Home Office to set up an urgent working party to look at changes in the complaints system. He said he was not expecting "a bouquet from all sections of the police service. We set out to do that which we think will enhance the whole process."

The judge said the authority was in favour of less secrecy, greater expedition without doing away with thoroughness, hearings in minor matters which were swifter and closer to the ground, a more independent tribunal for serious matters that left chief constables to deal with penalties.

The reduction in the standard of evidence would be based on "the balance of probabilities" rather than "beyond reasonable doubt". The authority would apply the change to minor cases but did not rule out its application to more serious cases and is thinking of a sliding scale of

Thinning of forest will help wildlife

John Young reports on a project that balances forestry and heathland

ABOUT 350 acres of rare lowland heath in Dorset are to be restored in a project announced yesterday by the Forestry Commission.

Roger Busby, the project conservator, said that it should be of significant benefit to wildlife, including two of Britain's scarcest reptiles — the smooth snake and the sand lizard — as well as nightjars, woodlarks, Dartford warblers and the silver-studded blue butterfly.

A number of fragmented small heaths will be rejoined by removing trees to create broad corridors. Some heaths will be expanded, and on the Holt Heath national nature reserve nearly half the forest area will be clear-felled to provide habitats for woodlark and nightjar. A total of 25 kilometres of existing forest rides will be widened.

"Experience over the last 10 years has shown that we can combine productive forestry



Mapping out the future: Oliver Lucas, from the Forestry Commission, on site at Wareham forest, Dorset

with the conservation of heathland wildlife," Mr Busby said. "We believe that this major new project is what many people want, and that the balance between forest and heath is in the national interest." If heaths became too

small, wildlife populations were less likely to survive and were unable to escape disasters like fire. Reptiles in particular needed a range of habitats, including dry heath as well as bogs. The commission manages 7,500 hect-

ares of national land in Dorset, of which more than two-thirds are heathland soils. Since 1750 more than 80 per cent of the natural heathland in the county has been lost; between 1930 and 1950 large areas were planted with trees, but since then agriculture and building development have been the principal culprits.

Last year Poole borough council provoked a fierce controversy when it granted itself planning permission for housing on 17 acres of Canford Heath, part of a site of special scientific interest. A High Court challenge by the

World Wide Fund for Nature and the British Herpetological Society was rejected in December, but last month Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, intervened to revoke the planning consent.

The loss of lowland heath, which once covered large swathes of southern England, has long been one of the biggest concerns of conservation bodies such as English Nature (formerly the Nature Conservancy Council). But heather, gorse and other vegetation regenerate quickly after trees are felled.

Anglo-Catholics clap hands with the charismatics

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE extremes of catholic tradition and charismatic ecstasy are meeting this week at a conference which challenges religious stereotypes. A growing band of Anglo-Catholic charismatics, who hold fast to the sacramental traditions of the Church of England but "enjoy" high-chaplinian speaking in tongues, are meeting in Hertfordshire to celebrate the solemnity of mass in a style perhaps more akin to pentecostalism than catholicism.

A study to be published next month concludes that the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England is weakened and may become still smaller and increasingly sectarian. *Anglo-Catholicism*, by William Pickering, says that Anglo-Catholics represent about a fifth of those who attend Anglican services on a Sunday and have a powerful lobby in the general synod. But for the Anglo-Catholics at the conference, their traditional movement, which transformed the church, is now itself being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fr Denis Bradshaw, vicar of St Joseph the Worker, Northolt, west London, spoke proudly: "Our worship is very charismatic, with modern worship, songs, a music group. We have house groups, prayer groups, Bible study. We have a healing ministry and speaking in tongues. But we

still use incense, we wear vestments. It is bells, smells and clapping of hands."

Fr Martin Platten, from Oxford, who was an evangelist, is now a committed charismatic Anglo-Catholic, the conference press officer and a member of the church's general synod. He said: "It is a mistake to think most Anglo-Catholics are stuffy, reactionary, middle-class types. They are ordinary, down-to-earth Christians trying to serve the Lord. In a sense, every Christian who is a real Christian is a charismatic. A charismatic Anglo-Catholic is someone within the Anglo-Catholic tradition who has discovered the joy of charismatic renewal."

The 200 delegates included Fr James Naters, a monk recently elected superior of the Society of St John the Evangelist, a dozen nuns, priests and members of the laity. They have filled the High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire for the week. Delegates were on a long waiting list. Fr Naters said the movement began 18 years ago in Walsingham, when a handful of priests decided Anglo-Catholics should pay more attention to pentecostalism. "We are people who realise that God through His spirit is doing wonderful things."

Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity, by William Pickering (SPCK, £11.99)

Man stole £115,000

A financial consultant who deceived two close friends out of £115,000 was jailed yesterday for two-and-a-half years. Graham Goodale, aged 44, of Little Houghton, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to stealing £83,798 from Roy Walton, whom he had known for ten years, and £31,387 from Paul Austin. Sydney Levine, recorder of Sheffield crown court, told him: "You have made away with an enormous sum of money belonging to two friends, one of whom has lost just about everything that he inherited."

Damages award

Martin Ryan, aged 40, a Channel tunnel worker whose legs were crushed in July 1989 when a concrete segment of the service tunnel lining fell on him, was yesterday awarded £370,173 agreed damages by the High Court.

Rivers fouled

British Nuclear Fuels was fined £2,000 by Whitehaven magistrates yesterday after it admitted polluting two rivers with acidic effluent from Sellafield, causing the death of 4,000 fish.

Kidnap charge

John Warrington, aged 43, of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, was yesterday remanded in custody by Dorset magistrates until May 1 charged with kidnapping Margaret Smith, wife of a millionaire. He is also accused of false imprisonment and making a £500,000 blackmail demand.

Case adjourned

The case of four West Midlands police officers due to face charges relating to the misuse of Police Federation funds was adjourned until May 20 by Solihull magistrates yesterday. They are all expected to face charges of theft and false accounting.

BBC jobs to go

A further 364 jobs are to go at BBC Radio in London, it was announced yesterday. Caring, cleaning and security services at Broadcasting House will be contracted out to save £1 million a year.

£470,000 award

Audrey Stewart, 31, of Bicester, Oxfordshire, left paralysed after part of a building which was being demolished collapsed on top of her, was yesterday awarded £470,000 damages in the High Court against the company that carried out the work.



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Now officially the best in the business.

Since its recent introduction the Primera has been widely acclaimed by the motoring press as a leader in its class.

It's rather more rewarding than surprising then that the Primera 1.6LS should win the coveted 'Best Company Car' prize in the 1991 What Car? Cars of the Year Awards.

To take the honours, the Primera had to outperform some worthy competition. This it did comfortably thanks to its 95bhp twin cam 16 valve engine which together with speed sensitive, power assisted steering and unique multi-link front suspension make the Primera a delight to drive.

But driver appeal is just one area where Primera had to impress the judges.

They also took account of the Fleet Manager's requirements for unfailing reliability, low running costs and a car that holds its value — equally important

considerations for the private motorist. Here again the Primera triumphed thanks to the outstanding levels of build quality achieved at Sunderland where the British-

built Primera is produced in one of the world's most technologically sophisticated car factories.

Add to this exceptional levels of comfort and refinement and a generous specification and it's easy to see why the 1.6LS Primera emerged a clear winner.

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Take a look at the new Primera at your nearest Nissan dealer. From just £10,213 (excluding delivery and number plates) you won't find yourself in better company.

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THE TIMES THURSDAY
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AS PRESIDENT de KORT was appealing to business leaders in London to invest in South Africa, a senior official of the African National Congress was saying privately the opposite to a similar audience in Harare.

A few hours later, terrified commuters threw themselves from a moving train in Swaziland to escape a camp who were lashing and stabbing at them with axes and meat cleavers. One woman died.

The dispute is a very high light the divisions in the South African business community in a country.

Marcos assets retrieved

By RUTH GLEDHILL

THE Philippines has recovered assets worth \$155 million (£26 million) in five years of tracking down wealth linked to former dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The recovery was announced yesterday by the Philippine government. The assets were recovered from at least 550 million recovered to have been kept by the Marcos family in Swiss and Hong Kong banks.

David Lait, chairman of the presidential commission, said the on good recovery, said the recovered \$45.5 million worth of assets included property, art, silverware and other items owned by the Marcos family or their business associates. The commission recovered many of the assets from businesses acting as fronts for Marcos.

The commission, formed in 1986 to trace Marcos-linked wealth around the world, said the family and its associates stole up to \$10 billion from the country. The dictator fled in 1986 in Hawaii, where he had fled after being toppled in a 1986 revolt.

Part of his wealth is believed to be buried in a family mausoleum on Luzon island.

Offer declined: Imelda. Mrs Marcos declined a nomination for the post of the next secretary-general of the United Nations. She was nominated by the International Association of Friends of the UN.

Mrs Marcos said she had to decline the offer because "my primary duty is to my country and my people". Her immediate concern, she said, was to return to the Philippines to bury her husband.

Winner in fight

From MARTIN FLIN

DURING the early 1950s there were at least 12 big American companies bidding for lucrative Pentagon aircraft contracts. In the 1980s there were seven. By the late 1990s, after this week's award of the 20th century's last and biggest defence contract, there may be only five.

On Tuesday evening, after the stock markets closed, the Pentagon announced that a consortium comprising Lockheed, Boeing and General Dynamics had won a month contest to build the



Rice: first-look, first-kill capability ensured

nation's next generation of fighter jets, a contest that by some estimates could be worth \$45 billion (£6 billion) over the next 20 to 25 years. In Georgia, Texas and Washington state yesterday thousands of workers were celebrating their new-found job security in one of the nation's riskiest industries. Lockheed's chairman, Daniel Tellep, said: "This absolutely solidifies our future in military aircraft programmes."

The losers, Northrop and

De Klerk dogged by spectre of violence

FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

AS PRESIDENT de Klerk was appealing to business leaders in London to invest in South Africa, a senior official of the African National Congress was saying precisely the opposite to a similar audience in Harare.

A few hours later, terrified commuters threw themselves from a moving train in Soweto to escape a gang who were hacking and stabbing at them with axes and meat cleavers. One woman died.

The disparate events highlight the dilemma Mr de Klerk faces as he tries to instil business confidence in a coun-

try at war with itself. While his enthusiasm for political reforms creates a favourable impression abroad, he is haunted by the spectre of civil strife at home. Closely following on Mr de Klerk's heels, Nelson Mandela arrived in London yesterday morning to reinforce the message that sanctions need to remain in place until reform is further advanced. He saw the opposition leader, Neil Kinnock, and helped to unveil a statue of himself in Madame Tussaud's.

South African commentators were encouraged by Mr de Klerk's reception in London, but took a less sanguine view of the country's future. A recurring theme of newspaper editorials is that he cannot break the cycle of economic depression and political violence alone. The prevailing view is that wherever Mr de Klerk goes, the ANC obstructs his efforts to revive the economy. Consequently, the deprivation which underlies the strife cannot be adequately addressed.

Business Day, a financial newspaper, said that the business community has watched the president make foreign conquests before, but the country has not been inundated by European or American investors. "It is a vicious circle. While violence scares investors away, the economy stagnates, jobless queues lengthen and the violence escalates... President de Klerk can no more command those problems to go away than he can command foreign investors or bankers to put their money at risk here." ANC strategy so far is perceived as counter-productive because whenever Mr de Klerk tries to jump start the economy, the ANC tries to remove the spark plugs.

Thabo Mbeki, the ANC foreign affairs director, reaffirmed its policy on sanctions in Harare. "We need to be able to say that sufficient change has taken place in South Africa for the rest of the world not to apply pressure. We believe that we can't say that yet," he said. Mr Mbeki argued that legislative reforms proposed by Pretoria should be implemented before sanctions are removed.

Business Day said: "The ANC acknowledges the need for jobs, economic growth and foreign investment. It seems to think that these things will all happen, instantly and simultaneously, when it gives the word. They will not. Nelson Mandela should be out there, too, urging trade links and job-related investment."

Leading article, page 15

Winner takes all in fighter contest

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

DURING the early 1950s there were at least 12 big American companies bidding for lucrative Pentagon aircraft contracts. In the 1980s there were seven. By the late 1990s, after this week's award of the 20th century's last and biggest defence contract, there may be only five.

On Tuesday evening, after the stock markets closed, the Pentagon announced that a consortium comprising Lockheed, Boeing and General Dynamics had won a 54-month contract to build the

McDonnell Douglas, contemplated a black future, the latter immediately announcing 500 lay-offs. Between them they had invested \$1 billion in the contest with Lockheed. The defence budget is shrinking and the Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF) was the last big military aerospace contract for years.

Northrop is now 60 per cent dependent on the controversial B-2 Stealth bomber which Congress is threatening to axe. For cash-strapped McDonnell Douglas, the prospects are as bad.

To the Lockheed consortium, the ATF contract should be worth \$12 billion as it enters development between now and 1996, and \$65 billion or more as it builds 650 of the \$100 million planes in the subsequent decade or two. The navy may also order a version and then there are foreign sales. However, there are still obstacles to be surmounted, not least on Capitol Hill where the expenditure has to be approved and where the debate over the ATF is just beginning.

The US Air Force insists the plane is necessary to extend an unbroken period of American air supremacy dating from the second world war into the 21st century. It will ensure American pilots have "first-look, first-kill" capability, said Donald Rice, the Air Force secretary, on Tuesday. The ATF will be the first fighter in history to combine "stealth" radar-invisibility, the ability to "supercruise" at supersonic speeds without using fuel-hungry afterburners, extreme agility and state-of-the-art avionics.



Rice: first-look, first-kill capability ensured

nation's next generation of fighter jets, a contest that by some estimates could be worth \$95 billion (£56 billion) over the next 20 to 25 years. In Georgia, Texas and Washington state yesterday thousands of workers were celebrating their new-found job security in one of the nation's riskiest industries. Lockheed's chairman, Daniel Tellep, said: "This absolutely solidifies our future in military aircraft programmes."

The losers, Northrop and



Search for survivors: rescue workers in Limón, Costa Rica, begin sifting through the remains of a hotel reduced to rubble by an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale. At least 46 people in Costa Rica and 28 in northern Panama were killed, and nearly 1,000 injured

Separatists in Punjab turn from bullets to ballots

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN AMRITSAR

PUNJABI extremists have decided to fight elections, reversing years of defiant rejection of the democratic process and giving them a serious chance of seizing political control in India's most violent state. The decision, a week after separatist groups announced a boycott of the promised state and parliamentary elections, amounts to an admission that their

military campaign is in trouble after the latest security operation.

The announcement by the three main Panthic committees, whose member organisations spearhead the violent separatist campaign, to contest the elections adds an unexpected dimension to the outgoing Delhi government's surprise decision to allow Punjab to vote. Mainstream national parties like the Congress (I), the Bharatiya Janata Party and the communists have said that they will

boycott elections in the state unless they are delayed until late June.

Punjab will vote on June 22 and Assam, which has also been affected by political violence, on June 6 and 8. Such a delay would allow time for the new Delhi government to cancel the poll - which it would be likely to do. The general election is being held elsewhere in India from May 20-26, with a new government due to be installed by June 5. Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress (I) leader, has left little

doubt that he will not allow elections in Punjab if he returns to power.

There is no chance of a free and fair election in the state. And if the state fell into the hands of separatists or their puppets, it might illegally declare independence from India, further inflaming the secessionist war. However Chandra Shekhar, the outgoing prime minister, hopes that by forcing them to a contest, he will further weaken the extremists, who enjoy little grass-roots support.

Peking pulls plug on a war of words

Peking - China yesterday declared its loudspeaker war with Taiwan was over. Loudspeakers from the south-eastern province of Fujian would fall silent after decades of blaring propaganda across the narrow Taiwan Strait to the Nationalist-ruled islands, the New China News Agency said.

The loudspeaker war was all that remained of a cold war confrontation to win back Taiwan, home of the Nationalist government since it was driven from China in 1949.

China's decision comes as tensions between Taipei and Peking have eased considerably. Later this month Taipei plans to send an unofficial delegation to Peking to begin discussions about cultural and other exchanges. (Reuters)

Minister fined

Islamabad - A Pakistani court convicted Iftikhar Ghilani, a former law minister, of corruption and barred him from politics for seven years. The court also fined him two million rupees (£51,000) in the first accountability judgment against the government of Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister. (AP)

Homes raided

Tokyo - Japanese investigators raided 48 homes and offices across the country in a corporate scandal that involves 219 paintings, including a Renoir and a Chagall, and property deals worth millions of pounds. (Reuters)

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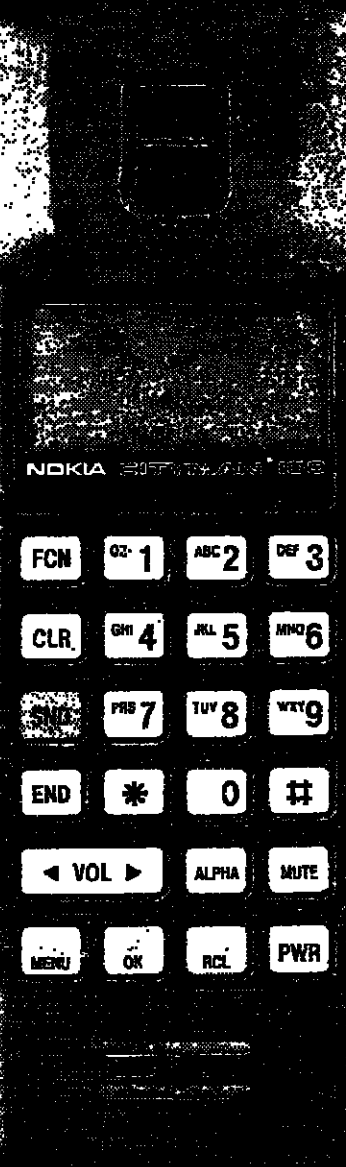
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Political gambit ensured survival of Soviet leader

By PETER MILLAR

FUTURE historians analysing the end of the Soviet Union will find the most remarkable political gambit was how Mikhail Gorbachev came to power by marginalising his power base.

When he became general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985 he inherited power over an organisation that ran every aspect of life from the gates of Vienna to the Pacific.

Slogans like "the party is the wisdom, honour and conscience of the people" were solemnly formulated and intoned every May Day by an orator on Lenin's tomb as the masses filed by, waving borrowed flowers and plain clothes ranks of KGB men.

Today, a mere six years later, the slogans are as much a part of history as the communist parties of Eastern Europe. But with them has gone the structure of Soviet life. Mr Gorbachev showed a remarkable political finesse by not destroying the party, instead he led it to one side, out of the mainstream of national life, and then threatened to leave it there.

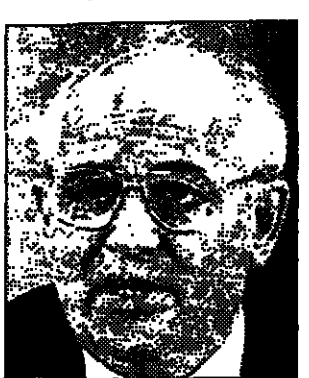
In the old structure, which was really Stalin's autocratic creation from an original idea by Lenin, the general secretary was as much a god — with the power and life and death — as any Roman emperor. He was head of an immense feudal bureaucracy which operated on the ancient laws of personal patronage. In theory, posts were elective; in practice they were nominated from the top down.

The exception was the top job, of course, which had to be won by backstabbing among one's peers. Once in power, the leader of the party nominated his own politburo and they, in turn, used their privilege and power to ensure that their own supporters were appointed to the 300-strong central committee, or to the ranks of a supplementary 100 candidate members. The central committee men, in turn, made sure their cronies got control of the regional district and city soviets (councils) that regulated local life. The KGB was, as its motto proclaimed, "the sword and shield of the party." Its will was done.

Parliament was a rubber-stamp assembly of propo-

sitional elements of housewives, tractor plant managers, tame ethnic minority leaders and token young people, all voted into meaningless office by an open ballot with a single list. It was possible to vote "No", but not to suggest alternatives. This "Supreme Soviet" met twice a year in two-day sessions to unanimously agree in the name of the people to everything that their masters had done in the meantime. The leader of the party took the title of chairman, in effect speaker, of the parliament.

The government was an unwieldy clump of executives, in effect a collection of the heads of the nationalised industries, which of course included everything. Their chairman was known in the West as prime minister but he



Gorbachev: led party to sidelines of national life

was really just a co-ordinator, usually a member of the politburo. The politburo and delegated secretaries of the central committee took all the policy decisions about running the country. The government carried them out, usually not very well.

This balance, or rather imbalance, of power was reflected throughout society. The most important man in any factory as in any regiment or on any ship, was not the manager or captain, but the political officer because he represented the party.

Mr Gorbachev crept through all this like a worm in an apple. He persuaded the party that making the presidency a real job would be good for the country's international image. It followed that it would be better still if he were at the head of a real par-

liament. All of this was swallowed, albeit with a few chokes and splutters, because it seemed to do no more than give governmental force to the already existing concentration of power in the hands of the leader of the party. But the presidency was the top job in a new constitutional structure based on a parliament that took advantage of the opportunity given it.

The party was persuaded, with few more splutters, to accept other parties because, at least in theory, they would reinforce the legitimacy of the ruling party. So, when Mr Gorbachev created new presidential bodies, such as the National Security Council, charged with preserving internal order, it was the reformers, not the hardliners who squealed. Similarly, the role of chairman of the National Defence Council, the man with the finger on the nuclear button — remained with the head of the party, only in fact, no longer in theory. That job now went with the presidency, which for the moment was indeed filled by the head of the party. But did it have to be?

Not necessarily. All over the country, used to mirroring the changes at the top, the levers of power slipped, imperceptibly, from political officer to general or factory manager.

Of course, the hardliners have twigged to all this, which is why they now want Mr Gorbachev out, almost as an act of vengeance. Their hope is that enough of the old way of doing things still permeates Soviet political life for a decision to ditch Mr Gorbachev from the party job to finish him also as executive head of government. But they are now having second thoughts: it might not. If Mr Gorbachev were jettisoned by the Communists, it might rally the opposition around him and, paradoxically, end forever the Communist party's hold on power.

Stalin's structure gave one man supreme power; it was based on the assumption that, given it, he would enjoy it, use it, but never betray it. That, however, is what Mr Gorbachev has done. For the party to crucify him now might mean cutting off its nose to spite its face.



United front: thousands of workers demonstrating in Minsk yesterday. They were demanding an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet

Workers in Belorussia defy strike ban

FROM ROBERT SEELY IN MINSK

WORKERS in Belorussia continued their general strike yesterday, defying the new deal between President Gorbachev and leaders of nine of the Soviet republics to stave off economic and political collapse.

One of the supporters of the treaty was Mr Gorbachev's rival, Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Federation. The deal calls for a ban on industrial disputes to force the Belorussians and hundreds of thousands of striking miners in Russia and the Ukraine to go back to work.

Aleksandr Galkevich, the Belorussian strike spokesman,

said, however, that the workers would ignore the proposed moratorium and continue their strike action, which has affected 80 factories throughout the republic including 42 in Minsk, the capital.

"The treaty is the regime's last attempt to hang onto power," he said. "They have no other arguments except threats and force. The leaders of Belorussia have always waited upon Moscow's word, but to use force in Belorussia will need military and police from another republic."

"We have different options now. One is a work to rule, another is an occupational

strike to take over the factories. We will continue striking until at least the 26th, Chernobyl day."

The workers' leaders presented their list of demands again yesterday. These include the resignation of Mr Gorbachev and his government as well as the dissolution of the Belorussian parliament and the setting up of a "Chernobyl crimes commission", which would report to the republic's supreme soviet.

There were unconfirmed reports that police had yesterday sealed off parts of Orsha, a city in northeast Belorussia, to stop workers

blocking the main Moscow to Minsk railway.

Belorussia's presidium met yesterday, as well as military and legal officers, according to the pro-independence popular front movement.

The group's spokesman, Alex Susla, said: "They are working out emergency plans to try to end the strike. It is a sign that the workers' action is becoming an increasingly serious threat to the system."

Mr Galkevich said: "It is a probability that there will be a state of emergency imposed. However, they might not call it across the entire republic

but only in areas where the strike is strongest."

MOSCOW: Striking dockers at the port of Klaipeda in Lithuania went back to work yesterday after the management agreed to double their wages. A deal was agreed on Tuesday night. "Reason prevailed," Nikolai Bereznoi, the port manager, said. "Salaries will increase twofold."

The republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are seeking independence from Moscow and their attempts could disrupt traffic through the ports of Klaipeda, Ventspils and Tallinn. (Reuters)

Gorbachev forced to seek compromise with Yeltsin

The Soviet leader has had to bow to his critics, Bruce Clark reports from Moscow

THE historic eleventh-hour deal reached yesterday between President Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, the Russian Federation president, shows that the Soviet leader, facing a surge of popular discontent and an onslaught of conservative criticism, has had to finally accept radical advice and seek a political compromise with the barons of the country's restive republics.

Mr Yeltsin has also had to make a political concession, by clarifying his attitude towards the coal strike launched eight weeks ago by miners, who greatly admire him and have given him crucial support in his battle with the central authorities. He added his name to a joint declaration which called on miners and all workers to call off strikes mounted for economic or political reasons, and to immediately make up for production shortfalls.

The nine leaders, representing the republics which are in principle willing to sign a new union treaty reorganising the Soviet Union into a looser federation, also agreed that clinching an accord on the issue should be a priority.

Mr Gorbachev, for his part, conceded that the Soviet constitution would be amended within six months of the signing of a union treaty, presumably in ways that enhance the authority of the republics at the expense of Moscow's powers. This solution, however, will be an anathema to his conservative critics, who say that even existing proposals for a union treaty involve the sacrificing of much of Moscow's power that the Soviet Union would cease to exist as a state.

In what may be his most significant concession, Mr

Gorbachev agreed that the "election of the organs of Soviet power" should be held anew once the constitution is amended. That could mean fresh parliamentary elections if the new constitution provides for the continued existence of a federal parliament or it could mean a presidential election by universal franchise. Either route could lead to Mr Gorbachev's removal as head of state, so he is in effect putting his head on the block.

In yet another significant accord, the nine leaders agreed with President Gorbachev on dealing out a measure of economic punishment to the six republics — Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Baltic states, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia — which have refused to sign any union treaty. While recognising the right of the rebel republics to make their own choices, they agreed that favourable economic treatment, presumably access to subsidised goods and raw materials, be reserved only for the signatories.

Amidst the euphoria at reaching a deal, sceptics, however, pointed out that the agreement contained enough ambiguities to unravel quickly. It would not be the first apparent reconciliation between Mr Gorbachev and Mr Yeltsin, his arch rival, to fail.

The two men, bitter antagonists since Mr Yeltsin's removal from the politburo in 1987, appeared to bury their differences last summer, when both agreed on the need for a fast-track approach to eco-

nomic reform. But Mr Gorbachev came under conservative pressure and quickly backed away from radical blueprints for a free market economy. Relations between the two leaders soured by year end, and the president appeared to rely more on hardliners in the security apparatus.

Early this year, their enmity reached a low point when Mr Yeltsin, at considerable risk to his political and possibly physical survival, denounced the clampdown in the Baltic republics, threatened to form a Russian army, and called for Mr Gorbachev's removal.

Yesterday's joint announcement called, somewhat implausibly, for the revival of an economic accord between the republics and the centre that had been a miserable failure from the start, leaving the centre complaining that its finances were on the brink of collapse as republics failed to make promised contributions.

The agreement also contained some populist economic measures, including the abolition of a deeply disliked 5 per cent sales tax on basic goods, and a promise of an early "decision on wage indexation".

Whether Russian miners will heed Mr Yeltsin's call is unclear. It is also uncertain whether the Ukraine strikers will listen to a similar appeal to return to work.

But Mr Gorbachev's best hope, as he finds off political flak from conservatives who still believe in a strong centre, is that Mr Yeltsin is prepared to keep his promise, made in France a few days ago, to defend the Soviet leader against the forces of reaction.

Walesa pleads for funds

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

PRESIDENT Walesa yesterday called on the British government to do more to encourage investment in Poland, and to support Polish efforts to seek closer association with the European Community.

In talks with John Major and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, Mr Walesa signed a joint declaration which emphasised his country's interest in closer co-operation over the EC, European security, cultural exchanges, Western investment and help in moving to a market economy.

The Foreign Office announced that S. G. Warburg, a leading City financier, has been appointed as an adviser to Warsaw on privatisation. The consultancy will be funded from Britain's know-how fund for Poland, which has allocated £50 million over five years.

Later Mr Walesa visited Westminster Abbey and attended a banquet at the Guildhall.

Today, on the third day of his state visit, Mr Walesa will hold talks with Margaret Thatcher and with the Labour party leadership. He will address a conference of young European politicians and will have lunch with the governor of the Bank of England. He is seeking relief from Poland's foreign debt, which includes \$2.3 billion (£1.35 billion) owed to British banks.

WARSAW: Poland has told the International Monetary Fund that it will tighten monetary control, curb inflation and speed up privatisation this year in return for a \$2.5 billion credit package sealed this month. (Reuters)

Property bill is passed

Budapest — After months of debate and legal wrangling the Hungarian parliament yesterday passed a controversial compensation bill aimed at reimbursing up to one million people whose land and property were confiscated during 40 years of communist rule (Ernest Beck writes).

Under the scheme, only farmers are entitled to their original holdings. Others, who lost land, homes, flats, factories and shops after June 1949, when the first communist-dominated parliament met, will receive special coupons which can only be redeemed for shares in state-controlled firms being privatised, or to buy council flats.

While the law fulfils a campaign promise made by the majority party, the Democratic Forum, for "historical justice", doubts have been raised about how the state can pay for its past misdeeds. It is estimated that compensation could cost the government £1 billion, straining efforts to balance the budget and repay £11.6 billion in foreign debt.

Fears raised

Vilnius — Soviet special forces were placed outside the main bank of a Lithuanian town populated by ethnic Russians and Poles. The operation involving "Black Beret" commandos raised fears that the exercise was part of a strategy to separate the area from the rest of Lithuania.

Turks deported

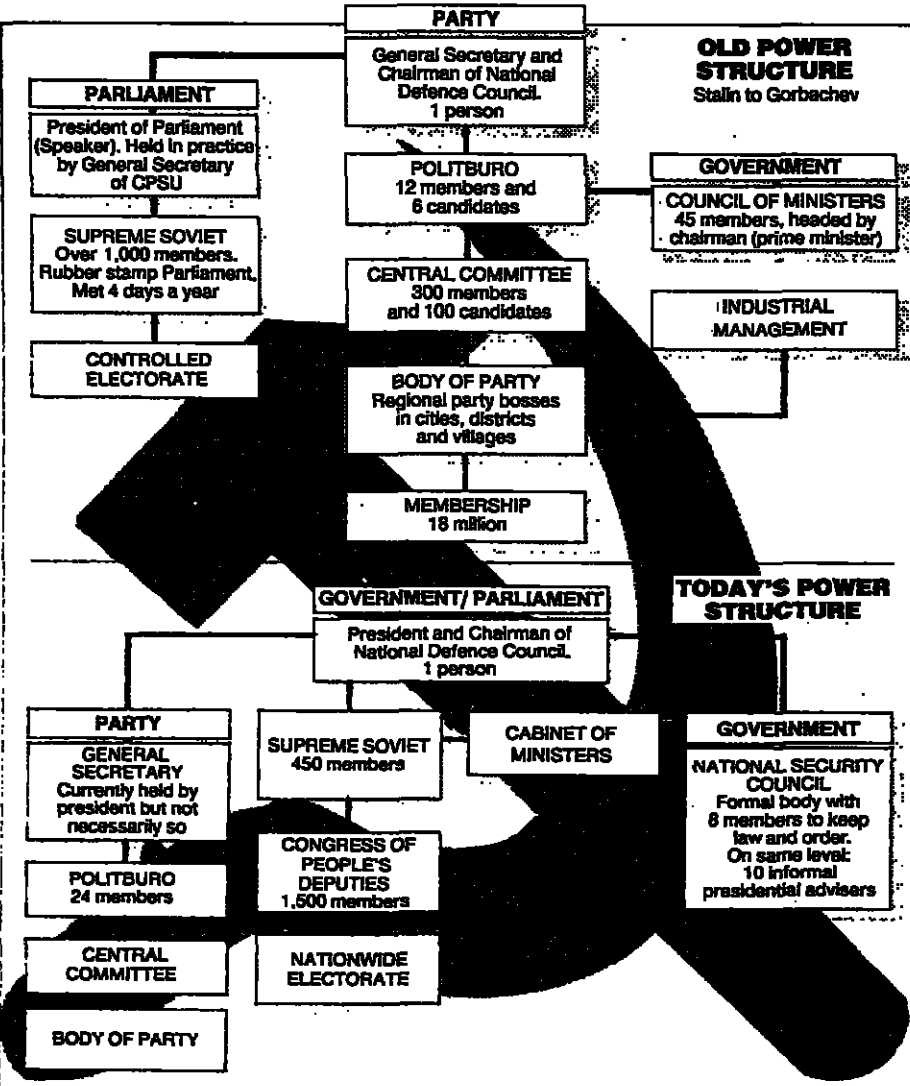
Stockholm — Swedish police put 28 ethnic Turks on a chartered plane to Bulgaria after the government turned down their asylum applications. They are to be followed by about 225 other deportees, most of whom have waited at a refugee camp for a decision on their applications since 1989. (Reuters)

Jobs to go

Bonn — Germany's highest court ruled that the government was entitled to fire about half a million former east German public employees no longer needed since unification last year. The ruling will increase unemployment in the east, already running at about 9 per cent. (Reuters)

Pipeline attack

Delmenhorst — An apparent attack was carried out on a pipeline in northern Germany used to supply fuel to Nato military sites. A defence ministry spokesman in Bonn said a small fire was reported along the pipe near Delmenhorst, 18 miles west of Bremen. Damage was minimal. (AP)



Hoxha's fear of plotters led to death of prime minister

From TIM JUDAH, IN TIRANA

BASHKIM Shehu was once a member of Albania's privileged elite. In 1981 his father, the prime minister, Mehmet Shehu, died. Officially he committed suicide after being revealed as a spy. Many believe that the country's Stalinist dictator, Enver Hoxha, ordered or even personally carried out his execution. After the death of Shehu, the Hoxha regime began persecuting his family. A month ago his son, Bashkim, aged 34, was released after eight years of prison, internal exile and labour camps.

Mr Shehu described the circumstances that led to his father's death. He said there had been no struggle for power but his father

had incurred Hoxha's displeasure after his brother had become engaged to a girl whose family was considered "reactionary" because she had relatives who had fled abroad. "When my brother told my father about it he put ideology to one side and thought humanely about it."

However, he soon changed his mind. "He felt guilty; by approving the marriage he felt he was denying the ideology that had sustained him for 40 years. His change of mind came too late, though."

Mr Shehu said that at first the country's dictator was friendly when talking about the engagement, "but then the harranguing began, supported by the orchestra ... Hoxha fantasised about es-

pionage and plot, he invented things which he then believed. He began to think that if my father succeeded him then continuity could not be assured, so it was best to eliminate him."

On December 17, 1981, the party's politburo met to discuss the engagement, broke up for the night and was due to meet the next morning to continue. Mr Shehu said: "That morning they brought me home from work. Through the door I saw my father lying dead on the bed, pistol in hand. My mother said that he had been shot through the heart."

"The official version was suicide but it is not clear. The general opinion is that it was a murder. I think it is quite possible that they murdered him. If he committed

suicide it is because they drove him to it." Soon afterwards, Mr Shehu and his family were arrested and thrown into jail. "They told me: 'If you don't confess to counter-revolutionary agitation and propaganda then we'll get you for high treason and espionage and you will be shot.' I could not resist the psychological torture. I confessed. It was completely false."

Of the jails and labour camps he said: "It made me strong to see people who were not broken by torture or beatings or even 30 years in prison." He said prisoners were manacled hand and foot and left hanging from walls for days, or left in chains lying on the floor in winter wearing only underwear. "They had decided that we

would die in prison," Mr Shehu said, adding that, perhaps under the impact of the collapse of communism in eastern Europe in 1989 he was released into internal exile and worked the fields of a remote village. "The peasants were too scared to torture me."

He wrote a letter to President Alia, protesting his innocence. "I waited, but the reply did not come. Then I wrote him another letter protesting about human rights." This time Mr Shehu was tried and convicted and sent to work in a copper mine. Mr Shehu's mother died in prison and his elder brother committed suicide after being forced to "confess" and implicate his father. Other relatives were also jailed. "After my father died we buried

him, but then they dug him up. I wanted to know what they did with his remains," Mr Shehu said. "But I don't know where to ask." Mr Shehu says that he has come to terms with the fact that it was his father who had helped to create and sustain the political jails and the country's tyranny for three decades. "My father was perhaps the prime executor of terror in Albania from 1948 ... I love my father, he did terrible things but a father is a father. It is painful to say such things but it is true. The gulag system was necessary for communism. He completely believed in it but he did not know what was really happening. It was the distance of power. He had the cataracts of ideology clouding his eyes."

Tehran hardliners condemn accord on US refugee aid

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

IRAN'S decision to accept aid from America for Iraqi refugees has enraged Iran's hardliners who fear that President Rafsanjani is paving the way to renew ties with the "Great Satan".

American aircraft may fly directly to Iran with relief aid, a presidential spokesman said on Tuesday night after agreement was reached through Swiss intermediaries in Tehran. German troops at the weekend were the first Western forces allowed into Iran since the Islamic revolution and officials in Bonn said yesterday their contingent could swell to 2,000.

"We should spit on their faces," said a leading radical about Western countries such as Britain and France that were among the first to send aid to Iran. "If America decides to put honey into the mouths of Muslims, be sure that it is poison and not honey," said Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkali, one of the toughest of Iran's parliamentary deputies.

Ahmad Khomeini, the son of the late spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, said that the restoration of ties between Tehran and Washington was impossible because it defied his father's teachings. "Our difference with the United States are on the issue of Islamic values, which should not be sacrificed," he said. More moderate Iranian officials, however, have called for international aid and accused the West, in particular the United States, of ignoring the plight of more than a million refugees on Iran's

border, while channelling abundant aid to Turkey, a Nato member.

President Rafsanjani, committed for mainly economic reasons to ending Iran's international isolation, cited frozen assets rather than spiritual differences as the main stumbling block to better relations with America.

Washington insists that ties can not be restored until six Americans held hostage by pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon are freed. But co-operation on an ostensibly humanitarian operation could help to build bridges between the two countries.

The president has welcomed Britain's safe havens plan for Iraqi refugees, but said the international community should show an equal interest in providing security for Shia refugees in southern Iraq.

Ayatollah Khalkali was also furious that Tehran had allowed visits to assess Iran's aid needs by Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of the French president, and Lynda Chalker, Britain's minister for overseas development.

While Tehran is divided about the West's response to the refugee problem, Western allies have been trying to prevent arms proliferation in the Middle East. President Bush is expected soon to announce a new arms initiative in the region. Washington has already welcomed John Major's suggestion of a special arms register at the United Nations to monitor the build-up of offensive weapons in areas such as the

border, while channelling abundant aid to Turkey, a Nato member. Britain, the United States and France are, meanwhile, pushing the UN to establish a civilian presence in Kurdish towns and villages to monitor Iraq's treatment of returning Kurds, diplomats say. The UN teams would report any human rights abuses to the security council, which would use the information in its regular 60-day assessments of whether certain sanctions against Iraq should be lifted.

An advance party of ten to 15 UN refugee workers is due to arrive in Iraq this week to begin setting up a network of humanitarian centres.

Britain and the United States are to lead a concerted attack on what they see as foot-dragging by the UN in taking over and organising the international relief effort for the Kurds. Sir David Hannay, the British ambassador to the UN, is to urge Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the UN secretary-general, to speed up UN involvement in northern Iraq. Britain and the United States both believe that the UN is not properly shouldering its responsibilities and is not responding to the urgency of the refugees' plight.

In Tokyo, Toshiaki Kaifu, the Japanese prime minister, and his cabinet yesterday formally approved sending self-defence minesweepers to the Gulf, paving the way for the first overseas deployment of Japanese military forces since the second world war. Four minesweepers, a 2,000 tonne support vessel and a supply ship will leave tomorrow.

Leading article, page 15

Kurdish rebels cling on to precarious freedom

JUST 30 miles from Iran, set on a plain below the snow-covered mountains of the border, the Kurds who dared to rise up against President Saddam Hussein are nervously waiting to discover whether freedom here will last.

The all too familiar curse of an uncertain future hangs over them in this dismal and unruly town. Chaotic and depressing though it is, Diana represents the Kurds' tenuous grip on a precarious moment of hard-won liberty from the Iraqi leader's regime.

I found Karim, the suave senior peshmerga (rebel) officer, in his office in a wrecked government building. He is a former Baghdad lawyer who has lived with the rebels in the mountains since 1973. In the grubby corridors where a stream of men await his advice and orders, stencilled portraits of Saddam over the doorways have been covered with green paint.

Karim is trying to create order and organise the defence of a place where 10,000 people normally live. In the past few weeks, however, hundreds of thousands of people have passed through on their way to Iran, leaving debris all around and the hospital full. The roads are littered with cars, lorries, tractor-trailers and Iraqi army vehicles, which have been either destroyed or cannibalised for spare parts.

Throughout the areas of northern Iraq controlled by the resistance, cars have been abandoned, many simply out of fuel, and their wheels removed by refugees who have burned the tyres for warmth at night.

The infrastructure of Diana has been wrecked. There is no electricity or clean water. Food in the bazaar is selling at hugely inflated prices and fuel is so hard to come by that the rebels are driving 30 miles into the mountains to the border to bring back full jerrycans.

Like everyone in Diana,

Despite their grim conditions, Edward Gorman reports from Diana, northern Iraq, that the Kurds are talking only of autonomy

which fell without a fight at the beginning of the rebellion, Karim is hoping freedom is here to stay. "We hope this will become part of the safe area," he said.

"If we have that, people will not have to leave. People are happy because they don't want to stay under Saddam's regime. They think they are free - I think I am free. At the moment the future looks good."

Despite the events of the past few weeks, the Kurds who have taken refuge here continue to talk only of autonomy. Many hope the safe areas plan could be the beginning, though their leaders worry that the West will again shrink the political question, helping refugees to return to a land still threatened by genocide.

Adnan Gorbel, aged 36, a schoolmaster who was imprisoned in Baghdad for two years before being sent to the Kuwaiti front where he was captured by American troops, said he was looking forward to the arrival of American forces in his home town.

"Maybe this is the beginning of the end of our struggle - everyone thinks this," he said. "If the Americans come here and make a camp, maybe we will stay - it's a good area for camping."

On the wall outside his school, now being used as a dormitory for visitors and peshmerga, about 30 paintings, probably not seen in public for years, were hanging in the sun. In desolate and disturbing images they depicted the flight of the Kurds at the hands of

Saddam and his Baath party regime.

One, in browns and greys, shows a face contorted with pain, appearing ghost-like within the brick walls of a prison cell. Disembodied hands are strangling him and a padlock inserted through his lips holds his mouth firmly shut.

About 40 miles south, the rebel front line is strung out on craggy hill tops near the village of Salahuddin. Commanders there told me that two battles had been fought to hold the line against Iraqi ground troops and armour, the last on April 11.

According to Hamid Afendi, the senior Kurdistan democratic party officer in the area, the Iraqis lost 250 men in the engagements, while about 100 peshmergas were killed. Government troops were allowed to remove their wounded and dead after the battle.

At the point nearest where the ceasefire was convened by senior officers meeting in no man's land a week ago, the opposing forces are now just a quarter of a mile apart and watch each other nervously for the first sign of a renewed attack. Three tanks and an armoured personnel carrier lie burnt-out where they were hit by rocket-propelled grenades on the road leading to the Iraqi position.

The peshmerga were confident they could hold the line, but with miles of open country behind them and no sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons at their disposal, they seemed vulnerable to being leap-frogged by helicopter-borne troops who could cut them off.

Despite having been pushed back from the cities to the south to this point, morale among the rebels is buoyant. A senior commander called the ceasefire a sort of gentleman's agreement. He rejected criticism of the decision to enter negotiations with Saddam, arguing that it had given them the chance to regroup. "The dialogue is another way of continuing the struggle, whatever the consequences," he said.

Earlier, on the way to Salahuddin he had pointed out an emergency airfield at Harir, capable of taking Hercules transport aircraft. He said that during the Gulf war he had sent a message to European governments, pointing out that if they wanted to help the Kurds, this was an ideal place to land military equipment. The offer had not, he said, been taken up.



Barbed response: Kurdish refugees survey the landing pad at Isikveren camp in Turkey. The wire was erected to stop refugees raiding helicopters arriving with food

Charity rides to the rescue

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A BRITISH animal hospital has come to the rescue of 350 horses in Jordan who are starving because of the effect the Gulf war has had on the tourist trade.

Since last October, the Brooke Hospital for Animals has been spending £5,000 a month on food vouchers for the horses belonging to the bedouin guides who take tourists through the narrow gorge leading to Petra. The guides, all self-employed, have virtually no income now as there are so few tourists visiting the ancient city.

The hospital, a charity founded by Dorothy Brooke in Cairo in 1934, provides free veterinary service for working animals in clinics in the Middle East, and in 1988 opened a centre at Wadi Musa, near Petra, under the patronage of the Jordanian royal family. It now has a permanent staff of 11, who have been giving vouchers for animal feed that can be cashed in the town. Without these, the horses would have been destroyed.

Richard Searight, grandson of the founder, said yesterday the hospital was one of the few charities that remained in Jordan throughout the Gulf confrontation. Throughout the world the hospital, a registered charity with 14,000 subscribers, treats about 40,000, mostly equine, animals a year. It is now opening clinics in India and Pakistan.

Iran will back bid to free hostages

Iran has promised its support in helping to free hostages in Lebanon during talks with the Irish government (David Watts writes).

Ali Akbar Velayati, the Iranian foreign minister, made the commitment when he met his Irish counterpart, Gerry Collins, in Dublin yesterday. It is believed that the rapport between the men was partly responsible for the freeing of Brian Keenan last year after four and a half years in captivity in Lebanon.

But he emphasised that the freeing of hostages was not something Iran could achieve on its own and again, he linked their freedom to Western pressure on Israel for the freeing of Muslim prisoners.

UN force arrives

Kuwait City - An advance guard from a 1,400-strong United Nations monitoring force due to take control of a six-mile buffer zone in south Iraq yesterday raised its flag in Safwan. But American officers in the town made clear US troops would stay in the area for several weeks.

Harvest fears

Baghdad - Iraq said it was in danger of losing most of its wheat and barley harvest this year because the United States will not let it use helicopters to spray insecticides in the mainly Kurdish north. Washington and its allies have told Baghdad they will shoot down helicopters and planes north of the 36th parallel. (Reuters)

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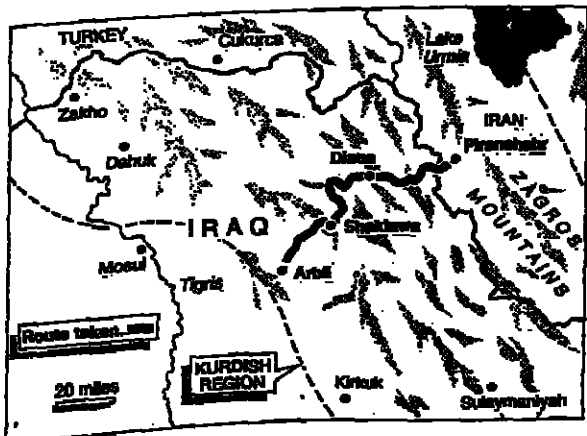
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Bringing history back to life

A museum is experimenting with a computer system that can breathe new life into all kinds of exhibitions. Nick Nuttall reports

Staff in the basement of Blackburn museum are experimenting with a computer system that may help to breathe new life into the faded photographs, relics of the King Cotton heyday of the mills, and other collections depicting old and modern Lancashire life.

The technology is an example of "interactive multimedia", potential Nineties buzzwords that describe computer systems able to mix text, graphics, sound and moving video instantly on one screen.

At Caen, France, the memorial museum has installed a system that helps to give greater insight into the second world war. Visitors can watch screens showing live footage of German aircraft and, by pressing buttons, can find more information on, say, the manufacturer of the aircraft and their design through the simultaneous use of images and words.

Michael Millward, Blackburn's curator, has less ambitious plans, but the interest in multimedia from a provincial museum indicates that its usefulness is beginning to filter down to a more general, non-business audience.

Blackburn's initial aim is to harness the technology, in this case a system developed by the Digiturth company, of Royston, Hertfordshire, for a permanent exhibition of Asian culture.

Computer experts will programme the machine to display labels in Asian languages such as Gujarati and Urdu for physical exhibits around the gallery. The museum also intends to offer still photographs of famous buildings, such as the Golden Temple, the Sikh shrine in Amritsar.

Visitors will ask the screen to display their native tongue, instead of having to look at confusing and unsightly handwritten labels pinned by staff around the gallery, while also seeing high-quality images from the chosen region in windows that come up on the screen.

The potential is there for a user to be able to mix live footage of oxen at work in Asian fields with graphics on ploughs, while viewing physical exhibits on farming.

The difficulties of programming Asian languages forced Blackburn to delay the introduction, but Mr Millward believes the system has a future and could start playing a role later in the year.

In the long term, other projects could include putting on to the system's laser discs the museum's collection of photographs of local life, which could be supported by computer-based graphics. Visitors could view photographs of millworkers on the screen and call up a plan of a typical Blackburn cotton mill of the early 20th century.

Those interested in engineering could choose to zoom in on a graphic of a loom used in the long gone mill, and see live video footage of it in operation along with images of the makers, and even a map of the world depicting where the looms were exported in the days of Empire. "The possibilities appear endless if the resources are there," Mr Millward says.

He believes such systems may save time and be valuable in conservation, especially of old and perishable objects. Instead of asking to see photographs that could be damaged by excessive handling, visitors would be able to view them safely and instantly on screen in a quality equal to the original.

An added advantage is that staff will not have to dig out the photographs every time.

In addition, computerising the collection means a museum's entire works can be seen on a given day, whereas physically displaying them is constrained by space.

The multimedia systems in one museum might even be linked with those in another, through satellite and modern telephone links, says Patrick Jocelyn, of Digiturth. This would allow curators to display relevant collections and information from hundreds or thousands of miles away, side by side with related works held in their museum.

"I suppose you could even get to the stage where you could have museums without physical exhibits," Mr Jocelyn suggests.

During the past few years companies have begun to pump millions of pounds into developing multimedia systems.

Esprit, the European Commission information technology research programme, is at an advanced stage in devising a scheme called Multivox. The project is aimed at setting standards, ensuring that manufacturers' products function together



Modern and ancient: Michael Millward with a live multimedia show (top). Above: Blackburn's static exhibit of Asia's past

effectively and creating a European multimedia terminal, and is being backed by companies including Acorn, Northern Telecom, Bull of France and Philips, the huge Dutch group.

IBM, Apple, Commodore, Intel and Thorn are also vigorously promoting the technology.

The applications that are emerging cover every facet of leisure, education and business life and, as

prices fall, they could become commonplace.

A car mechanic might be issued with an electronic manual displaying detailed graphics of a model's engine, with audio instructions on how to diagnose a fault and a video on how to fix a spare part.

Tourists at public information kiosks could gather a wealth of information on places of interest such as the Tower of London

alongside details of Tube links, addresses of nearby hotels and videos of the rooms and views from the balcony.

Electronic books for use in schools and at home could allow readers to enjoy a biography of Churchill and call up, next to the text, maps of war campaigns, images of the House of Commons and recordings of his most famous speeches.

The systems could equally be used to enliven history, science or English literature lessons. Students of Shakespeare could read *Hamlet*, listen to the great speeches delivered by Lord Olivier, or even Mel Gibson, and watch a video of the ghost scene.

Mr Jocelyn believes the same technology is about to revolutionise the way people do research and use televisions.

With artificial intelligence fitted to systems, the terminal could scan video, audio and text databases for links between apparently unrelated topics such as suspension bridges and space flight.

Doctors could programme their television sets to record automatically the snippets of documentaries or news broadcasts dealing with cancer.

"This is where the technology is heading," Mr Jocelyn says.

Safety nets that snare mosquitoes

A deadly lure has been found to work where anti-malaria drugs have failed

Mosquito nets are returning to the international battle against malaria, reflecting high-technology medicine's failure to overcome one of the world's greatest scourges. A simple modification to the standard net can produce a life-saving bonus.

Up to two million people, mostly children, are killed by malaria every year, and another 110 million contract the disease. Despite vast spending on developing anti-malaria drugs and other treatments, eradication of the disease is no more likely now than in the mid Fifties, when the World Health Organisation predicted it would be wiped out in five years.

Such ambitions have been abandoned. The malaria parasites carried by mosquitoes develop rapid resistance to even sophisticated drugs. Although several vaccines are undergoing trials, none of them is expected to be available before the end of the century. Meanwhile, health experts are placing more emphasis on practical methods of controlling the disease.

Studies presented at an international conference on malaria, held last week by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, proved that nets impregnated with insecticides give substantial protection while acting as a lethal lure to the hungry mosquito.

The World Health Organisation is recommending them for people in malarial areas, and British travellers are being encouraged to include them in their luggage.

Trials in African and Chinese villages showed the nets killed up to 95 per cent of mosquitoes coming into contact with them, significantly cutting the number of malaria victims.

Christopher Curtis, a reader in

medical entomology at the London school, who took part in a three-year study of the equipment in Tanzania, says: "The nets have to be soaked in an insecticide solution, but that is an easy task that needs only a bucket and rubber gloves. We have found they give up to 18 months' protection before needing to be replaced or treated again with insecticide. That represents very good value."

The mosquitoes carrying the malaria parasite are attracted by the smell of a human sleeping under the nets. When the mosquito lands on the fabric, it is assaulted by chemicals that destroy its nervous system.

"We need new people and new ideas. They might come up with something ten times better and more effective than anything we have produced so far," the conference was told by Dr Louis Miller, a malaria expert at the US National Institutes of Health. However, impregnated nets were a step in the right direction, he said.

Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad (Masta), based at the London school, is offering a de luxe version of the nets, with a bottle of insecticide to treat them, for £40.95. Dr Jenny Levine, Masta's medical adviser, says: "About 2,000 people came back to Britain with malaria last year, and the number is increasing. Mosquito nets are a good idea, even if they seem to represent a return to Victorian ways."

The nets are not enough, however. Visitors to the tropics still need anti-malaria tablets for a week or two before going, and must continue taking them throughout their journey and for at least four weeks afterwards.



The mosquito: impregnated nets provide effective protection

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Smoking, drinking and unfit: what's up, doc?

If you needed information about how to live a long, healthy life, would you consult an accident-prone group of individuals, many of whom have a poor personal health record?

One of the great paradoxes of medicine is that doctors, the group of people with the greatest knowledge about how to avoid preventable illnesses, seem particularly likely to succumb to them.

In 1989 Dr Clive Richards, a researcher in general practice audit at Bristol university, noted in his research study on "The health of doctors" that as a group doctors experience twice as many deaths from road accidents as the general population, that they have a cirrhosis and suicide rate three times higher, and a drug addiction rate at least 30 times higher.

A survey published by Pharmaton Vitamins last week revealed that more than a third of GPs regard themselves as overweight, although only one in ten is actually dieting. Under their new contract, which came into effect in April 1990, GPs are encouraged to run health promotion clinics to help control diabetes, stress, heart disease, smoking, alcohol and diet. But can family doctors be effective if they fail to practise in their own lives what they preach to their patients?

GPs are probably most confident when talking about the dangers of smoking. Only one family doctor in eight smokes, compared with about one patient in three. Dr Douglas McIntyre, a GP in southeast London, advises all patients who smoke that they should quit, although he is a smoker.

"I think that when I tell a patient he needs to give up smoking for medical reasons it carries more credibility," Dr McIntyre says. "After all, if even I am admitting there is a problem, although I smoke myself, it must be serious. In fact, loads of my patients who have medical reasons to quit smoking, such as heart disease or circulation problems, have stopped over the years. I think other doctors who don't smoke have less success in persuading people to give up because they underestimate the problems."

"I also think that doctors overestimate their influence. I don't believe that a single one of my patients smokes because I do."

Like many of his colleagues, Dr McIntyre, aged 44, says he does not have the time or inclination to exercise, although he watches the fats in his diet and keeps his alcohol consumption to about two units a day (a unit is a half pint of beer, a glass of wine or a single measure of spirits).

Doctors may preach a healthy lifestyle to patients, but few practise it themselves. Ann Kent reports



For example: smoking GP Douglas McIntyre tells his patients to quit

However Dr Godfrey Fowler, a family doctor and reader in general practice at Oxford university, believes that doctors who smoke are less effective at persuading patients to give up. "I think there would be a similar problem if an unfit, overweight GP tried to advise patients about diet and exercise," he says.

Dr Fowler, aged 59, walks for pleasure, jogs once or twice a week, drinks no more than ten units of alcohol per week, has cut down on

dietary fats and increased the fibre in his diet, and has not smoked for many years. The latest statistics suggest that doctors are becoming healthier, he says. "Their life expectancy is now about five years longer than it was in the Fifties and slightly higher than average for the population as a whole, and the main reason for this is the change in their smoking behaviour."

Despite Dr Fowler's optimism about smoking, the unhealthy lifestyle of doctors is an international problem.

A recent report from the University of California deplored the fact that one American doctor in five never exercised, 11 per cent drank alcohol every day, only 50 per cent consulted another doctor about their problems, and fewer than half were immunised against hepatitis.

Little research has been done on the exercise habits of the average GP, although none of the people interviewed for this article believed that exercise was a regular part of the average family doctor's lifestyle.

GPs still have a high alcoholism rate, although there has been a recent decline in deaths from cirrhosis of the liver. Both the health committee of the General Medical Council, which has the task of considering a doctor's fitness to practise, and the national counselling service for sick doctors have commented that most of the problems referred to them are caused by the misuse of alcohol.

The published data on doctors' drinking suggests that heavy consumption of alcohol begins in medical school. A study carried out by students at St Bartholomew's hospital, London, revealed that just under one in four of the students was drinking more than the recommended safe limits. Research published in the *British Medical Journal* in 1987 suggested that doctors were more ready to advise smokers on giving up and overweight patients on dieting than heavy drinkers on cutting down.

Dr Thomas Bewley, a senior lecturer in the department of addictive behaviour at St George's hospital medical school, believes that doctors should show the public the same good example on drinking as on smoking. "I don't think doctors' drinking patterns are very different from those of the general population, but everyone drinks too much," he says. "It would be sensible for doctors to take their own advice about cutting down on alcohol, and it would also show a useful example to the public."

Ten years ago Dr Michael Tinker, a GP practising in the Scottish borders, and his colleagues started what was intended as an eight-mile run for doctors, but now the medics are outnumbered by patients. Nevertheless Dr Tinker believes health education dished out by GPs is often ignored.

"Unfortunately patients come into the surgery thinking that simply having their blood cholesterol tested is a panacea. When you tell them they need to do a bit more exercise, lose a stone in weight and change their diet, they don't want to know."

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

Beaten by the bio-clock



Not as young as they used to be: Allister Hutton, Bjorn Borg and George Foreman

Bjorn Borg's tortured 34-year-old face photographed as he staged a comeback this week tells an oft-repeated story: athletes age, and however carefully they have been psychologically counselled and scientifically trained, they must recognise that the bio-clock cannot be stopped.

Borg, soundly beaten by Jordi Arrese, joins the boxer George Foreman, aged 42, and the swimmer Mark Spitz, 41, as athletes who, although they have regained much of their former performance, find they

cannot beat younger stars.

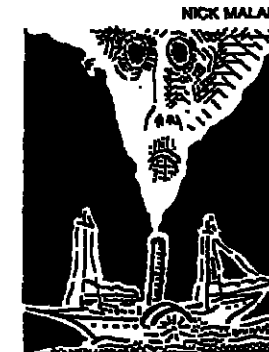
Last year Allister Hutton, aged 35, became the oldest winner of the London marathon. Marathon runners tend to develop in their late twenties or early thirties (this year's winner was 31). Past this age, training becomes harder and susceptibility to injuries greater. This year Mr Hutton finished 32nd.

Once disease is recognised - whether it is osteoarthritis of the joints, a narrowing coronary artery, a failing lung or an atrophied brain - it is easy to

understand why performance falls. But long before this stage, oxygen uptake by the cells is falling and the structure of the muscle fibres changing, so that energy is less well utilised and power is lost. The difference between a 20-year-old and a 50-year-old's performance can be demonstrated at any good fitness assessment unit. The differences between an athlete of 24 and 34 are more difficult to demonstrate but, small as they are, they are enough to relegate a former champion to the county circuit.

Good news but no cure

DR ALAN Ebringer's discovery of a possible link between urinary tract infections with *Proteus mirabilis* and rheumatoid arthritis is of scientific interest and provides valuable publicity for the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, but patients should not think it is likely to lead to an immediate cure of their arthritis or to the eradication of the disease. *Proteus* is the second most likely organism to cause an attack of cystitis or urinary tract infection. It will be difficult for genetically susceptible patients to avoid such a common complaint, and there is no evidence to show that, once rheumatoid arthritis had been triggered by *Proteus* in them, antibiotic therapy would keep it at bay. Experience with Reiter's disease, another form of arthritis, has shown that even when the precipitating organism, often *Chlamydia*, is eradicated the arthritis persists.



Death in the water

DURING the days of the Raj, no history lesson on India was complete without an account of the ravages of cholera, which had been endemic in west Bengal and Bangladesh for 200 years. The advent of easier travel, and steamships in particular, enabled cholera to spread to the rest of the world. It is now common in other parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Periodically there are major outbreaks elsewhere; at the

moment it is sweeping South America. Cholera spread to Europe and America in the early 1830s. New York suffered repeated outbreaks before it was known that cholera is spread by contaminated water. Initially the city fathers blamed the hordes of hogs that used to scavenge the streets, but it is now known that man is the only mammal which can be infected by cholera.

Large doses of tetracycline are an effective prophylactic treatment for cholera contacts. Research workers are experimenting with an oral vaccine but, although it will be easier to take, it will be no more effective than the present injection. A recent World Health Organisation report suggests that the usual estimate of 60-80 per cent protection for three to six months after inoculation is too high, but even 50 per cent protection is better than nothing, provided that it does not breed false confidence. The wary traveller should avoid shellfish and uncooked vegetables.

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Bitter-sweet pill

Will the death of a French woman affect British trials of the abortion pill?

THE abortion pill, RU486, could be available in this country early next year according to the manufacturers, Roussel Uclaf, and doctors involved in the British clinical trials. In France, where a woman who had taken the pill had a fatal heart

attack, the health ministry is to halve the dose of prostaglandin hormone which accompanies the pill.

The doctors involved in the British trial say there is an important difference in medical practice between the two countries. The French prefer to take the dose of prostaglandin through an injection. In Britain, the only recommended method of administering the prostaglandin will be via a vaginal pessary. The experts here say this is a crucial difference, as a pessary allows a much slower and therefore safer absorption of prostaglandin into the bloodstream than an injection.

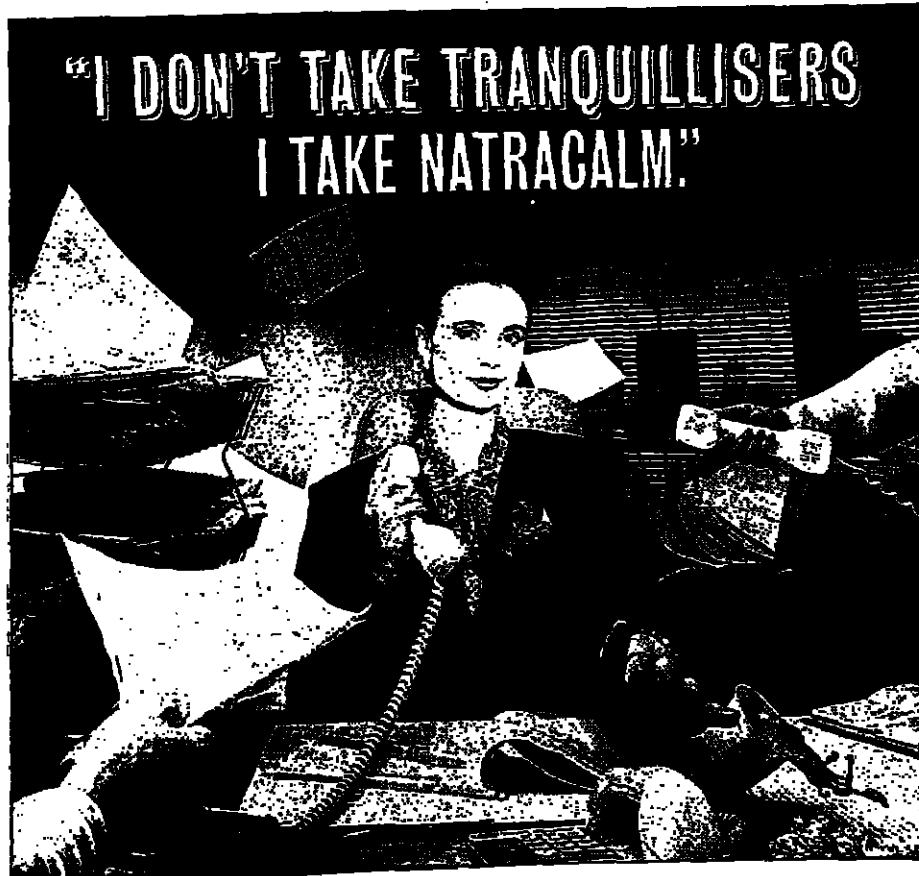
The woman who died was 31, considered well within the safe age range; 35 is the recommended upper limit. She was described as overweight and a heavy smoker, and this was her thirteenth pregnancy. She developed chest pains one hour after her injection, and died. A spokeswoman at the French health ministry said an oral form of prostaglandin is being considered.

DAVID Baird, a professor of reproductive endocrinology at Edinburgh university, one of the experts who has been carrying out trials of the pill in Britain for the past six years, says: "Women don't like having a termination, but this pill widens the choice for them. The advantage of surgery is that it is over and done with more quickly, but the woman has to have an anaesthetic. The advantage of a medical termination [i.e. with the pill] is that a woman does not have to come into hospital and have an operation, but she will probably bleed for a little bit longer afterwards."

"I would be very surprised if the pill was not given the all clear here. In spite of this death, it has a safety record comparable to surgery."

In France the total cost of treatment for an abortion using RU486 is £140, slightly more than the average cost of a surgical termination. Tony Eaton, the corporate and public affairs manager for Roussel in this country, says a decision on the price in the UK cannot be taken until the health department gives the go-ahead to market the product.

HEATHER KIRBY



"IT HAD BEEN ONE OF THOSE WEEKS, AND IT WAS CERTAINLY PROVING TO BE ONE OF THOSE DAYS... NOTHING WAS GOING RIGHT. BUT I COPEd, THANKS TO NATRACALM. TAKEN OVER A COUPLE OF DAYS WHEN YOU FEEL AS THOUGH THE WORLD'S DEFINITELY NOT ON YOUR SIDE, THEY HELP. THEY REALLY DO. SO NO, I DON'T TAKE TRANQUILLISERS. I TAKE NATRACALM."



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CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Hippy hip hurrah for the Sixties

Geoff Brown reviews *The Doors*, *White Palace*, *Scenes from a Mall*, *Quick Change*, *Wings of Fame* and the reissue of Renoir's *La Bête humaine* and (below) previews a new BBC 2 season of British short films

Asking Oliver Stone to direct a thoughtful little film is like asking an elephant to croquet a noise; he needs space, he needs noise, he needs to rampage. In *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July* Stone stomped through the Vietnam war, yet he cannot leave the Sixties alone. This was the decade that fuelled his anger, ignited his passions. *The Doors* (18, Odeon Marble Arch) — a biography of Jim Morrison, self-destructive singer of the fabled rock group — would seem to be heaven-sent.

Stone rises to the occasion, no question of that. The minutiae of Sixties' underground culture is paraded in glory. Hair becomes longer scene by scene; books by Artaud and McLuhan artfully drape sets. Dead slang is resurrected ("I'm really blown away").

Stone does equal justice to Morrison himself, skilfully portrayed by Val Kilmer. *The Doors* surging music blasts from the screen, the original tapes delicately doctored to incorporate Kilmer's own vocals. Kilmer's impersonation also keeps faith with the visual details — that seraphic face, that mole to the left of the nose — and, more important, with the Morrison myth.

Through his actions, lyrics and the rhapsodies of journalists, Morrison appeared as a poetic intellectual in love with ecstasy and death, gyrating his way towards an early grave. Stone accepts the myth without question. Look how his camera gazes in adoration, setting the hero against cosmic backdrops of stars, moon and desert. Look at the concert scenes — the yelling crowds eating up Morrison's acts of revolt against the hovering police. Look how the script barely mentions other groups; the Doors, it would seem, were lone sentinels, not one detachment of an army. Judged simply as cinematic frenzy, *The Doors* is impressive

enough in its wearying way. But the subject-matter shouts out for a wider horizon, a sense of irony about a hero who burned up his talents and spun horribly beyond control. Entranced by the spectacle, Stone neglects the inner feelings, the charisma that made his obnoxiousness bearable. Key relationships are botched: Morrison's much-abused girlfriend (played by Meg Ryan) seems more punch-bell than person.

As things stand, by the time Stone's restless camera tours the Père Lachaise graves — Chopin, Bizet, Molière, then, scrawled with graffiti, Morrison himself — the fatigued spectator may well be wondering how he possibly deserves such company.

One of the lesser-known pleasures of the film critic's life is being woken at 7am to take delivery of a large plastic hamburger, sent by a distributor with money to burn. The gift advertised in *White Palace* (18, Plaza and elsewhere), a torrid love tale featuring Nora, a burger waitress from the School of Hard Knocks, and Max, an advertising go-getter. Luckily, the film itself is far from plastic. Susan Sarandon, James Spader and director

The subject needs a sense of irony about a hero who burned up his talents

Luis Mandoki fan sexual fires that make most recent Hollywood romances seem nursery fodder.

Sarandon, now settled bravely into her early forties, gives a wonderfully ferocious performance. Nora is a hard-drinking, hard-smoking slut; the first gift Max brings her is a vacuum cleaner. The couple meet in a furious harangue over a burger bill discrepancy; then she gets under the skin of the reclusive Max, still nursing tears after his wife's death. Passion blooms nightly in Nora's bed. The crunch comes, however, once Max's new flame emerges to meet his middle-class friends.

While Sarandon is voluble and fiery, Spader compresses emotion into a slight smile, or a winsome twinkle. He catches Max's reserve exquisitely, though for the film to avoid any trace of glibness, we need more information about the im-



"The minutiae of Sixties' underground culture paraded in glory": members of the group and entourage in Oliver Stone's *The Doors*

pulses that push an upwardly mobile man downhill. Sarandon's tornado of a performance finally overbalances the dramatic structure; still, Mandoki's film (his first since the tear-jerking *Gaby: A True Story*) is meaty enough to deserve two cheers.

Paul Mazursky's *Scenes From a Mall* (15, Cannon Shaftesbury Avenue and elsewhere) rates barely one, though it teams Bette Midler and Woody Allen (making a rare appearance outside his own films). With such striking personalities we expect fireworks, yet Mazursky combines his stars in a bland, talkative film about a Beverly Hills couple spending their sixteenth wedding anniversary squabbling over infidelities at a ritzy shopping mall. Midler, in a tremulous dramatic performance, plays a psychiatrist with a best-seller on marriage in the shops. Allen, sprouting the beginnings of a pony-tail, is a successful sports lawyer so in tune with the Californian spirit that he threatens a dinner guest for calling Los Angeles a cultural desert.

Can this really be Woody Allen talking? The patron saint of neurotic New Yorkers struts his usual

nervous gestures, but Mazursky and Roger L. Simon's script leads him astray into a complacent, alien world. For all the pair's breast-beatings, we never take their marriage rift seriously; the quarrels seem one more diversion in a day spent indulging whims in clothes shops and the Maison du Caviar. As the talk runs on, we long in vain for other characters to break the monotony. With Allen and Midler, that should never happen.

While Woody Allen cavorts in LA, Bill Murray — a far different, smaller talent — bites the Big Apple in the silly but enjoyable *Quick Change* (15, Warner West End and elsewhere), co-produced by Allen's partner Roger Greenhut. Murray, venturing into direction for the first time with scriptwriter Howard Franklin, puts his dead-pan style to profitable use as a New Yorker who mounts an audacious bank robbery, only to be trapped in the city's tentacles trying to reach Kennedy Airport.

Car thieves, the Mafia, ostentatious bus drivers: they all trip up

Murray, though an odious sidekick (an over-the-top Randy Quaid) hardly helps. Too much time is wasted with Murray and Geena Davis sparring romantically — who cares whether these cartoon figures raise a family or not? — but *Quick Change* generates enough vitality to ride over the rough spots.

Train spotters anxious to catch SNCF Pacific locomotive number 22326 should head for the Hampstead Everyman, where the giant huddles through Jean Renoir's 1936 classic *La Bête humaine* (PG), based on Zola's novel. Yet by dwelling so lovingly on an engine-driver's high-speed view of tracks and tunnels, Renoir aimed higher than background atmosphere. Characters in this updated tale of jealousy and murder — the driver (Jean Gabin), the station-master (Fernand Ledoux), the temptress (Simone Simon) — are swept along by the brute force of industrial society; while for Gabin, the train almost enjoys the status of a wife. Renoir is too great a film-maker, though, to hit us over the head with metaphors. Gabin, at the peak of his popularity as France's doomed

hero, invests his role with gentle nobility; Simon weaves a bewitching, catlike path between the males, luring them to their doom. Only Renoir himself, chewing the scenery as the affair's scapegoat, punctures the intense, lyrical mood. *La Bête humaine* is double-billed with another French plum from the golden age, *Quai des brumes*.

Those films are so French, they might be wearing berets. But what is the nationality of *Wings of Fame* (15, Curzon Phoenix and Cannon, Fulham Road)? The director, Otakar Votocek, is a Dutch-based Czech; his language is English, his actors British, French and German. This, in a word, is Eurotrash. To a degree, the film's statelessness suits the story, mostly set in a grand art-deco hotel where dead 20th-century celebrities polish their egos and chafe over the fragility of fame.

Votocek's film, a first feature, proves annoyingly sterile for an after-life fantasy, though it is difficult to see how this plot could be enlivened. Peter O'Toole cuts a droll figure as a preening actor; others wade through the script, hoping for the best. It rarely happens.

BRIEFING

Fun and felony

WHODUNIT? That venerable question will surely be much uttered in Nottingham this summer during Britain's first crime and mystery festival. "Shots in the Dark '91" includes a film season, literary events and a photographic exhibition called "The Face of Crime" — compiled, apparently, with the assistance of the Notts Constabulary. The festival runs from May 30 to June 9 at Broadway, Nottingham's Media Centre.

Rapped up

WHEN the leading rapper of our age, MC Hammer, hits London on May 4 and 5, the Wembley box-office takers will simply be icing on a vast financial cake. MC Hammer already has an \$8 million (£4.7 million) advertising contract with Pepsi, and his merchandising deals extend to an MC Hammer doll that is being marketed by Mattel, the US toy manufacturer. Now the rapper is to endorse a video game, test his fans' feel incapable of playing with their home computers without his imprimatur.



MC Hammer: rapper

Last chance...

THE tormented tsar dies for the last time at Covent Garden (071-240 1066) tonight. Andrei Tarkovsky's powerful production of Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* has the Soviet bass Fyodor Dushchik heading a fine cast. Rozhdensvensky conducts.

REVIEWS PAGE 18
Theatre and Dance

Pithy pictures bearing fruit

Does this thumb-nail blurb whet your appetite for a good night out at the multiplex? "A woman, her baby and a venomous spider. Geraldine James and Liam Neeson star in this exercise in suspense set in the Australian outback during World War Two." Scale down your expectations: Alan Grif-

fin's film *Storm* only lasts ten minutes. Along with 11 other miniatures, the drama forms part of *10 x 10*, BBC Bristol's latest series showcasing the work of aspiring British film-

makers, beginning tomorrow at 10.20pm on BBC 2. The title is inherited from the last season, when there were ten films.

Griffin deserves admiration for pluck, at least. These days, ten minutes would hardly see many directors past the credit sequence, and the use of the mobile, fluid Steadicam apparatus elongates some camera shots way beyond previous limits. Brian DePalma eats up half the total running-time of the *10 x 10* directors with the opening shot in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*: a seamless display of Steadicam virtuosity, following a drunken Bruce Willis from an underground car park, through corridors, kitchens, up the elevator, into a banquet hall crammed with New York glitterati.

Yet many distinguished feature directors began by thinking small. In 1934 Orson Welles took his first fumbling steps in the five-minute *Hearts of Age* (showing today, coincidentally, in a Hampstead Everyman programme of shorts). Godard's second film, *Une Femme coquette*, took ten minutes over a De Maupassant story; Scorsese, in 1967, needed five for *The Big*

Shave; Polanski used ten minutes for *Mammals*, though his major achievement at the Lodz film school, *Two Men and a Wardrobe*, ate up 14; in truth, it could benefit from cutting.

In theory at least, the extremely short short — here I except cartoons and commercials — forces the director to evaluate every element of script, sound and image.

Look at the work of Humphrey Jennings, one of British cinema's greatest glories. In wartime films such as *Listen to Britain* (20 minutes) and *Heart of Britain* (nine), he brought new finesse and surreal poetry to the documentary-maker's art. Look at underground film-maker Kenneth Anger's four-minute marvel *Kustom Kar Kommandos*, a rapt contemplation of handsome man and chrome machine: one minute longer, and the spell might have been broken.

So good luck to the *10 x 10* miniaturists: the devisers of ten-minute thrillers, science fiction tales, documentaries, ghost stories and the odd experimental fling. When your budgets and running times balloon — as they probably will — in years to come, you have nothing to lose but your potency.

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PRISONERS OF DISARRAY

What Britain's two visitors from South Africa will take home with them this week is not clear. President F. W. de Klerk wants further steps to reduce his country's economic and political isolation, to bolster his position with his right-wing opponents in advance of constitutional talks later this year. But Britain has long wanted to end that isolation. The chief obstacle remains those, particularly in America and in international sport, who regard the African National Congress as speaking for all South Africans. As long as the ANC is in its present chaotic state, which certainly means until its June congress, this obstacle will remain. The ANC's hardliners will not climb down from their extreme stance on sanctions until they are in power.

Nelson Mandela, who arrived in Britain yesterday, has become as much a prisoner of ANC disarray as is Mr de Klerk. His time would be better spent at home. The ANC cannot go on blaming the government for black faction-fighting. Its recent decision publicly to arm its supporters may be understandable in reply to the militancy of its Inkatha rivals, but it is an ill omen none the less. The only solution to township violence is political. Nothing would do more to give credibility to black leadership than for both the ANC and Inkatha to agree and then enforce a ceasefire, and make use of the local democracy that does now exist in the townships.

But this is a mere preliminary. Political turbulence is endemic in Africa. Mr de Klerk is far from realising his ambition to create institutions capable of channeling this turbulence into democratic pluralism. Such institutions would ideally arise from talks with leaders of disenfranchised black groups. But these leaders must be able to deliver group support. Mr de Klerk has his own problems with white groups. The history of

constitutional negotiation shows that the nearer a deal, the more each side's supporters drift to the extreme.

That is already happening to the ANC. While much of the ANC's sabre-rattling prior to its June congress should be discounted, the demands now emanating from Mr Mandela and others are becoming more extreme and harder to abandon. The ANC's insistence that two white ministers should resign by May 9 is fanciful. This week's call for all white ministers to resign in favour of an "interim government" before talks on a new constitution begin later this year is equally implausible. A Dutch auction of black intransigence is in prospect.

Many South Africans are, perhaps understandably, euphoric in believing democracy is just round the corner. As euphoria gives way to realism, what is termed the negotiating phase is likely to be long and bloody. Mr de Klerk's democratic sincerity may be manifest. So is Mr Mandela's, at least when he can shake off certain unrepentant Marxist colleagues. The ANC congress in June is critical. That organisation remains, according to opinion polls, the most widely supported of black voices. But its leadership is an unelected and frightened elite. It is managerially and ideologically shambolic. After June, it could well disintegrate, leaving Mr de Klerk negotiating with a fissiparous rabble.

For this reason the most likely outcome of the current political upheaval in South Africa is that a new constitution will be imposed rather than negotiated. This should not be greeted as a defeat, nor should it prevent moves to end South Africa's isolation. South Africa's leaders, black and white, remain more committed to national reconciliation than those of half the world's nations. For them to remain outcasts from the international community is hypocrisy.

ARMS AND THE UN

At first sight, John Major's proposal last night to thwart the "Saddam Hussein of the future" with a United Nations register of arms sales is naive. The UN is barely capable of keeping an accurate account of its own employees. To keep a register of arms sales implies a capacity to detect cheating by governments and companies. The UN is nowhere near that level of efficiency. Governments who want to know what is going where can already refer to the data compiled by Sipri, the private Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which the UN is unlikely to better.

What would the UN be able to do with its data? Mr Major believes that, while there would always be cheating (by seller and buyer alike) a formal UN register would focus minds on the dangers of allowing too many arms to reach "unsafe hands". Yet he acknowledges that long before Saddam invaded Kuwait, Iraq's stockpiles were known to exceed by far its defensive needs. Even assuming agreement about what constitutes "excessive" levels of armament in a given country, enforcement, not information, is the problem.

After a war in which Western troops were killed with Soviet and Western weapons, nobody could quarrel with the principle of arms control. But UN involvement will help only if it can add muscle to moral suasion. However much in need of fine-tuning, that is where Mr Major's plan scores. He wants to build on the unprecedented cooperation during the Gulf war between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: the US, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China. These five countries sold 85 per cent of the weapons bought by developing countries in the late 1980s. Any government subject to a five-power ban could still turn to Germany, North Korea, Brazil, Israel, India, South Africa or the black market. But most of these are either marginal or subject to political and economic pressure by at least one of the five.

The chances are that the five will agree only rarely on such bans. After three decades of intensive negotiations, the US and Soviet

Union have so far agreed only to reduce the rate of growth of their nuclear arsenals. The end of the cold war has sharpened the arms manufacturers' hunger for Third World markets. The Bush administration is not only bent on "rewarding" its Arab allies in the Gulf war, but has revived export credits for arms sales to help American companies to compete more effectively with Europeans.

Mr Major's plan to involve the UN (a variant on a proposal by Edward Shevardnadze last August) can therefore only be a first, confidence-building step towards involving the Soviet Union and China in arms control. It should not weaken existing controls or deflect Western attention from the absolute importance of securing renewal in 1995 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is far from certain.

Arms control must begin with the worst first. Governments will always be tempted to finance their national defence industries through exports: the aim must be to prevent the most destabilising weapons reaching the worst regimes. The value of external restraints was demonstrated during the Cold War by Cocom, an organisation including Nato countries plus Australia and Japan set up to control exports of technology with military applications. Priority should now be given to expanding the membership of two other bodies, the so-called Australia Group which deals with chemical weapons and - before a new arms race in computerised missiles begins in earnest post-Gulf - the Missile Technology Control Regime set up in 1987 by a handful of Westerners.

Technology is important, but so is cash. Iraq bought its weapons with Western credits. Millions starve in Sudan but there is money for the civil war there. Japan recently announced that its future aid decisions would be influenced by the growth in recipient countries' military budgets. Britain should adopt the same policy at once and, if Mr Major wins five-power acceptance of his plan, should seek security council endorsement. Money lubricates the arms bazaar. None of it should come from taxpayers.

TAKING A RUNNING JUMP

A conference on the perils of running, jumping and standing still brought shoe manufacturers, architects, doctors and insurance managers to the Royal College of Surgeons in London yesterday. Banana-skin jokes aside, this was no laughing matter. The conference dignified itself with the title Jokes Ignored Conference on the Prevention of Slipping, Tripping and Falling Accidents, the third having been in 1986.

This is a slippery slope, at the bottom of which there may be tears. What was simply a subject for new expertise. The search for non-slip polymers with the right relative roughness for shoes and floors is a boom industry, assisted by new methods for measuring underfoot friction. The conference ranged from the latest research to "the everyday problems associated with slipping, tripping and falling".

From learned papers it is a small step to wrong answers. Some years ago local authorities became alarmed about the alleged dangers of children's playgrounds. They feared they were liable for harm. Damages when a child came to a year. Though fatalities averaged only one a year, there were said to be more than 100,000 there were said to be more than 100,000 accidents in playgrounds annually. So many accidents in playgrounds that the authorities ordered their playgrounds to be surfaced with thick rubber coverings at about £100 per square yard. But the springy rubber surface merely encouraged children to run a greater risk of fractured limbs.

A fall from stair or step is the most common form of home accident, with about

10,000 cases a year requiring medical treatment. Deaths from home accidents account for about two out of five of all accidental fatalities. So attempts to cut falls at home should at first sight save the NHS millions. Insist that everybody is insured against falls at home, and the insurance industry should make millions, especially if Britons continue towards the American habit of suing each other at the drop of a contingency fee. Such conclusions are easy to fall for, provided human nature is left out of the equation. But what if the level of risk each person is prepared to run is constant? What if each practical improvement in safety (or in the sense of security given by an insurance policy) is compensated for by changed behaviour, negating the improvement?

Human nature makes its own assessment of risk. Improve the surface of playgrounds, and children play rougher games. Insist on seat belts, and some drivers may become more reckless. Find the optimum friction between shoe sole and floor, and people will walk faster or less carefully, or break into a trot. The Fifth International Conference on the Prevention of Slipping, Tripping and Falling Accidents, whenever it is, must face up to the fundamental cause of all accidents, in the home or elsewhere, whether by slipping, tripping, falling or whatever. This is the behaviour of human beings, and their failure to comply with the expectations of the experts. Given human nature, not every safety measure makes for a safer world.

A moral test to curb arms sales

From the Archbishop of Westminster

Sir, Air Vice-Marshal Downey (April 23) is right to draw attention to the contribution massive arms sales have made to creating instability in the Gulf region. He is surely wrong, however, to say that the world arms trade presents "an economic, not a moral problem".

One of the lessons of the Gulf war is that international arms sales should never be governed solely by commercial considerations. The consequences of ignoring the moral dimension of arms transfers are now all too obvious.

Of course the world arms trade is as much a symptom of international tension as a cause of it. But even if curbing arms sales is no panacea, it is still an objective to be pursued, in conjunction with diplomatic efforts to build trust and confidence in highly unstable areas such as the Gulf through regional security agreements and guarantees.

If we are to escape from the intolerable mess which allows the poorest of our world to suffer unacceptably whilst global spending on arms grows inexorably, we must begin to create a moral climate in which the sale of arms is seen as generally unacceptable. Any substantial transfer of arms should have to be justified in terms of helping to meet a genuine need for self-defence, and without creating real social deprivation to pay the cost.

There should also be compulsory registration of all such transfers at the United Nations and an effective procedure for ensuring that once sold, arms cannot be used with impunity for the internal repression of civilians.

There is a tendency to assume that the principles of morality apply only to individuals and not to international relations. Here economic self-interest and political opportunism too often prevail. And yet these have repeatedly failed, even on their own terms.

Yours faithfully,
BASIL HUME,
Archbishop of Westminster,
Westminster, SW1.
April 24.

Help for cathedrals

From Mr Philip Tittcombe

Sir, That Mr Sawyer's comments (April 20) on the custodianship of cathedrals are fundamentally unsound can be demonstrated simply by comparing the condition of the fabric of English and French ecclesiastical buildings.

Although many important churches and cathedrals in this country are undergoing repairs and may well need to raise money from appeals, the condition of similar buildings in France appears to be generally much worse, in spite of government assistance.

The churches often have grey, battered facades and uncarved interiors. Repairs are certainly being undertaken, but in many cases the whole process seems to be much more amateurish and small-scale.

However much the French government spends on its ecclesiastical buildings, one can be sure that a considerable percentage is used in running the bureaucratic apparatus which is needed in keeping the whole show on the road.

In this country, cathedral and church authorities, whatever their spiritual difficulties, seem to be firmly 20th-century in their dealings with business matters relating to their buildings, which, in many cases, are in better condition than they have been since they were built.

I remain, yours very sincerely,
PHILIP TITTCOMBE,
6 Prentiss Court,
York.
April 20.

Calls of the wild

From the Head Keeper of Carnivores, London Zoo

Sir, I know of a television wildlife programme in which much of the footage purported to show carnivorous mammals slinking through dense forest in search of prey. The makers of the film brought these wonderful animals and their rainforest home into our living rooms - or did they? In point of fact, most if not all of the animals were filmed in their zoo enclosures, some of them in this country.

Much of the wildlife filming that we see on programmes of this kind cannot be shot in the wild and the zoo is the only alternative. The setting may be an illusion but the natural behaviours are genuine, demonstrating that a life in captivity does not automatically lead to abnormal behaviour patterns in animals.

As the "wild" disappears, the animals and plants will have to be more intensively managed to avoid extinction through inbreeding, and the techniques that are protected in zoos will be applied more and more in what is left of the wild. London is a trend setter in these techniques.

If London Zoo was an inappropriate place to keep wild animals the keepers, some of them experts in the field, would be the first to want the operation wound down. But this is not the case. We may be trusted to do what is best for the animals; but we need the financial backing to carry out the work we know to be important.

Yours faithfully,
DOUG RICHARDSON,
Head Keeper of Carnivores,
London Zoo, Regent's Park, NW1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

No sunlit uplands yet for jobs

From the Director-General of the Economic League

Sir, The present high levels of unemployment should not surprise anyone. The seeds of the present situation were firmly planted as long ago as 1981 and have been nurtured ever since.

Ten years ago manufacturing industry learned some very hard lessons. Such lessons, however, were not taken on board by either the service sector or indeed the public sector.

It was clear that the service sector would suffer initially from the recession, as it had gone largely unscathed in the past. It was equally clear that manufacturing industry could withstand a short sharp recession, but that over a prolonged downturn in world trading the rate of company closures and consequent job losses would accelerate.

Quite simply, by being lean and fit, companies have been able to weather much closer to the edge of the precipice. There was no fat left to trim and thus few savings to effect. The narrowest of margins existed between survival and closure.

As a result of the political and economic uncertainty, many companies were forced to increase stockholdings, funded by borrowings, just at the time when interest rates rose and bank managers began to look critically at the value of stock as security against overdrafts. As employee costs are typically the largest proportion of industry's outgoings, that is where the savings were and will be made.

Whether or not the recession is bottoming out is largely academic for most of our industries, including construction. The reality is that matters will get considerably worse before they get better - manufacturing and construction lead-times will see to that. The narrowing of the manufacturing base means there is less for the service sector to service.

Service industries have in the past forgotten the proper relationship between their activities and the rest of the economy. Without a flourishing industrial base, the sector has no custom.

The country must, therefore, steel itself for further increases in the unemployment figures, which would happen whichever party was in power.

Yours faithfully,
S. M. HARDY, Director-General,
Economic League,
Temple Chambers,
Temple Avenue, E.C.A.
April 22.

From Ms Tamsin Butters

Sir, It is welcome news (report, April 23) that Michael Howard, the employment secretary, has been urging Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, to approve proposals for a new temporary work scheme for long-term unemployed adults. With unemployment on the line to the well above two million, the Treasury

Two-tier danger

From Mr R. F. Churchett

Sir, I very much agree with Stuart Macdonald's assertion ("Let's dump the dance cap", Education, April 15) that the classic weakness of English education is its failure to integrate "academic" and "vocational" systems.

We must remain alert, however, to the danger of any return to the worst of a two-tier examinations structure, with vocational options in practice being offered only to those of moderate or less ability.

Unless we dispel the myth that vocational courses are not for our highest flyers our European partners will yet again have a head start, even before young people enter employment.

Yours faithfully,
R. F. CHURCHETT,
12 Phessant Drive,
Downley,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

From the Director of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Sir, It is an unpleasant fact that in the course of the next 50 years we are going to have to captive-breed as many as one thousand species of vertebrate animals if we are to save them from extinction. Although taking species from the wild to establish captive-breeding populations is controversial, there is no doubt that this procedure will become an emergency measure of increasing importance in the repertoire of tomorrow's conservationists as natural habitats continue to disappear.

London Zoo is one of a small and select group that has been pioneering new practices in artificial insemination, cryo-preservation of embryos, and the management of captive populations for maximum genetic diversity. This is the face of the modern caring zoo that provides leadership in the development of new conservation techniques.

Whatever the outcome of its current financial predicament, these vital activities must be continued. London Zoo is an institution with a well deserved, worldwide reputation for its research and education programmes. For the government to refuse it funding on the grounds that it is a private organisation providing an anachronistic entertainment is to misunderstand its role and standing.

Yours sincerely,
ROBIN FELLOW, Director,
World Conservation Monitoring Centre,
219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number - (071 782 5046).

Concerns for new Polish regime

From Ms Lyn Thomas

Sir, As Lech Walesa visits London this week, I trust someone will raise with him the threat to women's rights in his so-called "new democracy".

The Polish government is on the verge of outlawing abortion, which has been free on demand since 1956. This move in itself is deplorable, but is made far worse by the fact that contraception is virtually unobtainable. As in many eastern European countries, women have become accustomed, rightly or wrongly, to relying on abortion as a means of choosing their family size.

Under the new Polish law doctors will face imprisonment if caught performing illegal terminations and women will only be permitted abortions if life is at such actions have already been seen in Romania under Ceausescu, where women died in their hundreds after resorting to illegal back-street operations and where unwanted babies were dumped in the now famous orphanages.

Yours etc,
LYN THOMAS (European Director),
International Planned Parenthood Federation,
Regent's College,
Inner Circle, Regent's Park, NW1.
April 22.

From Ms Elzbieta Isakiewicz

Sir, My Warsaw correspondent Roger Boyes (report, April 17) wrongly accuses my newspaper, *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*, of attacking the British Know-how Fund.

Following my visit to the United Kingdom earlier this year, as one of a group of Polish journalists attending a six-week course financed by the fund, I felt a moral obligation to relate how, at least in the case of our group, British people pay money which was not put to the best use.

We were questioned minutely in Warsaw before the course about our experience, specific journalistic interests, and even our religious affiliations. The organisers appeared to take no account of this, in that one person, for example, was sent to spend two precious weeks copy-typing advertisements for *The Timber Trade Journal*, while another colleague, a specialist on local government, spent the same period typing births, deaths and marriages announcements for a small provincial paper.

My article did not constitute an attack on the fund itself, but was critical of its administration. I would have hoped this might have found some support from those whose taxes go into creating the fund.

Yours faithfully,
E. ISAKIEWICZ,
Tygodnik Solidarnosc,
Cockington 15/17,
00 950 Warsaw, Poland.
April 18.

Wrong pitch

From Mr Michael Horne

Sir, I would suggest a stringed instrument (possibly a violin?) as being more suitable to Dr Walkey's researches among bumble bees (April 12) than the piano postulated in Mr Paul Picken's letter (April 19). The relative ease of transportation would make it more convenient for use, and a claim for its efficacy is historically documented.

Pepys's diary, August 8, 1666: "... discoursed with Mr Hooke a little, whom we met in the street, about the nature of Sounds, and he did make me understand the nature of Musicals sounds made by Springs, mighty prettily; and told me that having come to a certain Number of Vibrations proper to make any tone, he is able to tell how many strokes a fly makes with her wings (those flies that hum in their flying) by the note that it answers to in Musique during their flying. That, I suppose, is a little too much refined; but his discourse in general of sound was mighty fine.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL HORNE,
The Carriage House, The Street,
Moston, Nr Holt, Norfolk.

From Mr Clive Wicks

Sir, I was extremely concerned to read the statement in your report of April 15 ("Help for London's endangered species") that Overseas Development Administration funds given to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) could find their way to the Zoo by default. WWF is indeed anxious to help the Zoo, but not in the manner your report suggests.

ODA provides WWF with a block grant each year (this year it is £1.4 million). The rules on the use of these funds are very strict. Ninety-five per cent of the funds must be spent on projects approved by ODA; only 5 per cent can be deducted to cover WWF's administration costs.

Yours sincerely,
CLIVE WICKS (Senior Conservation and Development Executive),
WWF United Kingdom,
Panda House, Weyside Park,
Godalming, Surrey.

From Mr Cedric Price and Mr Frank Newby

Sir, As co-designers with Lord Snowdon, we are concerned by your reporter's description (April 10) of the Snowdon aviary as a "contraption" and by his implication that it has not survived well. In fact, the structure, consisting of aluminium nibs and steel wire cables, has required little maintenance over almost 30 years. The cables are now reaching the end of their designed life span and require replacement.

The pigeons referred to in your report as interlopers are, in fact, rare African residents within the aviary.

Yours truly,
CEDRIC PRICE,
FRANK NEWBY,
38 Alfred Place, WC1.

Victim of emotional overkill

DONALD COOPER



Unsubtle: Pam Ferris as Arkadina, with John Haldstead as her brother the play, due to arrive at the Barbican in the summer. This is, sadly, a B-team *Seagull*.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

The Seagull

IN THE middle of the first act of *The Seagull*, just after the actress Arkadina's steward has told an inconsequential anecdote, Chekhov inserted the stage-direction, *pause*. For ten, twenty seconds the characters are left to muse, perhaps about the avant-garde playlet they have just watched, perhaps about the feelings of love they hopelessly harbour for each other. In Mike Alfreds' production for the Oxford Stage Company, the pause seems to stretch for one, two, three minutes. The cast stares, stares, and just for variety, stares again. The silence is supposed to be pregnant, but the pregnancy is a phantom one. If these actors are thinking about anything, it is surely the next cue.

That is characteristic of an evening full of ideas that the actors fail adequately to embody. They clearly believe, for instance, that Russians are tremendously volatile people, always swinging from mood to mood. So they bring out emotions like steamships on flags and flourish them, not always worrying about the inner logic that links them. Little, if anything, is happening in places that matter a great deal to Chekhov: that is, beneath the words and behind the eyes.

Even when the emotional logic is apparent, it becomes the victim of overkill. For instance, it is a good idea

to suggest that Masha, who is in love with Konstantin, is jealous of his beloved Nina, and that Nina does not like Masha's confidential conversations with Trigorin, with whom she would like to elope. But, again, their feelings are as obvious as Mayday messages directed at air-traffic control. There is little subtlety or finesse on show.

True, this is partly because Alfreds, knowing that Chekhov called the play a comedy, consciously reaches for laughter. He gets it in some unexpected places, too, for instance at the moment when Masha must casually announce that her leg has gone to sleep and exit "languidly and with an effort". Here, Caroline Quentin gives a big, pained "ooh", at which a concerned cast jostles round her, and she hobbles ostentatiously out, shoving away her husband, Roger Frost's Medvedenko, as he helps her. It is an attempt to do something new with an incident which usually passes unnoticed; but it is too strenuous, too attention-getting.

Michael Muller's Konstantin is partly a 1950s Angry Young Man, partly an unreconstructed tot; Nicholas Clay's Trigorin switches from the affable to the mildly turbulent; Pam Ferris's Arkadina has some heavily maternal moments, especially at an eccentrically staged ending, and can also screech like a brass band. There is nothing wrong with these readings, except the last. The trouble in each case is a lack of psychological coherence.

The one performer to emerge with

Rambert Dance Company

Riverside Studios

WILLIAM Tuckett has been hailed by some as the Royal Ballet's new golden boy, which must be a huge burden for a novice choreographer. Perhaps that's explained the strain on his face when he took a bow after the premiere of *Slippage*, his piece for Rambert Dance Company, unveiled in its second programme at Riverside Studios.

Slippage is Tuckett's first piece for a company outside the Royal Ballet confines. As has proved the case with Ashley Page, another Covent Garden choreographer, the opportunity to work in the more informal conditions of Rambert could be a beneficial escape. Certainly Tuckett's idiom looks more relaxed, more "contemporary". It abandons classical ballet outlines in favour of loose, undulating torsos, free shapes and a slippery, haphazard texture.

This style also matches the title, as do the shifting relationships between the eight dancers. They open the piece as individuals scattered about the stage, then coalesce into an amorphous group that repeatedly disintegrates into smaller units. Couples

form, sliding from heterosexual to homosexual, from passionate embraces to aggressive manipulation. Layers of clothing are progressively and provocatively discarded.

The temperature, though, never seems above tepid. Tuckett's ideas need more emphatic development; his movement lacks the visual interest to make an effective impact. He is also positively hindered by Dan Jones's unstructured score, with its layers of filigree notes and melody.

Embarque by Siobhan Davies, on the same programme, uses Steve Reich's *Oste*, which also proceeds in layers, but possesses a minimalist conviction, a vitality and distinctive character of its own. Tuckett should take note of how Davies's choreography never just sits on top of the music, but delves into it, exploring. And he should observe how she creates vivid shapes, theatrical patterns. Her cast spills onto the stage in a sweeping, spiralling braid that recurs at intervals, giving coherence to the whole. A couple slowly poses, dramatically and mysteriously snuggled against a back corner, while the other dancers perform dynamic, heel-footed steps. Davies is one of our best choreographers and this piece is mastery.

NADINE MEISNER

Carmen - The Play

Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh

THROUGH Mérimée and Bizet, the story of Carmen, wild sassy, free to come and go, to choose her lovers and eventually to be killed by one of them - has become as much a part of Western culture as the myths of ancient Greece. And, like them, it is open to continual re-interpretation. Stephen Jeffreys' play, up-dated to the Spanish Civil War, retells the story against a background of political confusion and internecine strife.

For a time it is ingenious and fascinating. José is a Basque victimised in Franco's army, Carmen a gypsy who sells guns to the Republicans, Escamillo is a socialist bullfighter in Barcelona, and so on. But the play ultimately proves that you change Carmen into Mother Courage at your peril.

Plays of passion, culminating in the blood lust of the bullfight, are beyond the capabilities of most British actors brought up in a stage tradition of emotional restraint. So for Commencement's pre-publicity to call this version "a searing, sensual drama"

ALASDAIR CAMERON

Sonorities Festival

Queen's University, Belfast

NOW that the Almeida Festival of Contemporary Music has all but disappeared from British concert diaries, Belfast's Sonorities Festival assumes even greater significance. Its only rivals now are the Huddersfield and Glasgow's Musica Nova Festival. Formulated and promoted by, and largely based at, Queen's University, Sonorities (which runs all its events as part of the city's determined effort to promote itself as a cultured city).

The theme this year is Scandinavian music. On the menu, besides the three events reviewed here, are concerts given by Håkan Hardenberger and the Esbjerg Ensemble, as well as home-grown artists and groups such as Capricorn, the pianist Rolf Hind, the clarinetist Ian Stuart and, of course, the Ulster Orchestra.

Some will point to the academic connection and claim that Sonorities is nothing other than an elitist corner of Belfast's life. To those, a concert on Sunday afternoon of electro-acoustic music offered the perfect counter-argument. True, the Ulster Museum, where it took place, is on the campus at Queen's, but its visitors are ordinary folk and no attempt was made to force them to show reverence for this intrusion into their outing.

The experiment resped two benefits. The previously uninitiated were drawn to experience the fascination of these strange new sounds coming from amid the museum's display of old industrial machines; and we who had deliberately come for the music were forced to ask ourselves a few questions about its intellectual society. Moreover, we were aware, particularly in the deafening crashes which opened the Norwegian composer Cecilie Ore's *Esper* (1988), that for once the audience was as much on display as the performers.

Prettier sounds were heard in *Pendant les heures de veille*, a clearly structured and textured, poetically

evocative work by a highly promising Queen's undergraduate, Paul McFadden. Pieces composed and played by the virtuoso Dutch flautist Jos Zwambag, *Mananama Mananama II* (1990) - a work involving live electronic manipulation by the soloist - and three "strange" flute pieces also had much to offer.

MEANWHILE, in the Whittall Hall, the young Swedish group bizarrely called Kammerensemble made an auspicious United Kingdom debut in two programmes, both brilliantly played under its conductor Ansgar Krook. It was perhaps a mistake to end the second concert with a workaday piece as Werner Wolf's *Glasser's Concerto* (1968), despite the soloist Håkan Rosengren's fine advocacy. Apparently this Hindemith-influenced figure has reached his Opus 550, and it shows. Sandwiched between this and Weber's *Concerto for nine instruments*, Op. 24, were two Swedish pieces. *Agazzi*, by the group's trombonist Ivo Nilsson, ingeniously and touchingly explores the extra-musical noises made by musicians:

scrapings, swishings, breath-sounds. Bengt Hambraeus's *Nocturnals*, a rhythmic, colourful piece, relies for its effect on its strong ritualistic element. All four works in the first concert were impressive. The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's notes attempted to explain with Ferneyhough-like verbosity how she had formulated the harmony and rhythm of her *Lichtbogen* (1985-6), using computer programmes at IRCAM in Paris with acronyms such as *Crime* and *Formes*. The piece itself, however, turned out to be something strong, mystical, beautiful and, yes, exquisite in harmony and rhythmic proportion.

Anders Eliasson's *Intersect*, a predominantly bright sound of a piece, full of contrasts, Sven-David Sandström's gutsy, determined, dense Flute Concerto of 1980, and the Dane Poul Ruders's arresting Four Dances in One Movement (1983) provided further ample testimony to the individuality and excellence of music in today's Scandinavia.

STEPHEN PETTIT

Arts features, page 13

NEW RELEASES

FREEDOM IS PARADISE (12): Involves Russian drama about a reform school inmate escaping to see his father in prison. Director: Sergei Bodrov. Renter (071-837 9402).

HAMLET (U): Mel Gibson as the moody Prince - a decent, lively performance but lacking the bold imagination that would give the film a strong reason for existing. Director: Franco Zeffirelli. Odeon Haymarket (071-430 7897).

RIFT (R): Marlon Brando's "face of war" portrait of a building-age crew from director Ken Kesey. Audiences: performances from unknown players. National Film Theatre (01-525 3252).

WAR PARTY (18): Modern-day Indians are forced on the warpath in Montana. Modest pursuit movie. With Kevin Dillon. SBN Video, director: Franc Roddam. Carmons: Oxford Street (071-525 3252).

0310 Haymarket (071-430 7897) Prince Charles (071-430 7897).

CURRENT

AMERICAN FRIENDS (PG): Nineteenth-century romance between an Oxford don (Michael Palin) and a young American (Tina Turner). Sander, charming, tasteful. Metro (071-430 7897) Odeon: Haymarket (071-430 7897) Mezzanine (071-430 7897).

AWAKENINGS (12): Tender, heart-tugging tale of neurologist Robin Williams saving the life of a comatose man. Director: Nick Cassavetes. Carmons: Oxford Street (071-525 3252).

THE GODFATHER PART II (18): Grandiose sequel to Francis Ford Coppola's Mafia epic, handsomely staged but lacking resonance. Al Pacino, Andy Garcia. Carmons: Baker Street (071-525 3252).

THE BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES (18): Brian De Palma's stylized, cartoon-like version of Tom Wolfe's novel. Carmons: Baker Street (071-525 3252).

GREEN CARD (12): Montage of American film clips, including a scene from *Shogun* and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where to see them. Director: Geoff Brown. Renter (071-837 9402).

CONAN (12): The first of a series of films about the adventures of Conan the Barbarian. Director: Michael Christy. Carmons: Oxford Street (071-525 3252).

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of current theatre in London. Some seats available. Seats at all prices.

COMEDY Pantomime, WI (071-525 3252). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, 9.15pm. 12.50. 15.00. 17.50. 20.00. 22.50. 25.00. 27.50. 30.00. 32.50. 35.00. 37.50. 40.00. 42.50. 45.00. 47.50. 50.00. 52.50. 55.00. 57.50. 60.00. 62.50. 65.00. 67.50. 70.00. 72.50. 75.00. 77.50. 80.00. 82.50. 85.00. 87.50. 90.00. 92.50. 95.00. 97.50. 100.00. 102.50. 105.00. 107.50. 110.00. 112.50. 115.00. 117.50. 120.00. 122.50. 125.00. 127.50. 130.00. 132.50. 135.00. 137.50. 140.00. 142.50. 145.00. 147.50. 150.00. 152.50. 155.00. 157.50. 160.00. 162.50. 165.00. 167.50. 170.00. 172.50. 175.00. 177.50. 180.00. 182.50. 185.00. 187.50. 190.00. 192.50. 195.00. 197.50. 200.00. 202.50. 205.00. 207.50. 210.00. 212.50. 215.00. 217.50. 220.00. 222.50. 225.00. 227.50. 230.00. 232.50. 235.00. 237.50. 240.00. 242.50. 245.00. 247.50. 250.00. 252.50. 255.00. 257.50. 260.00. 262.50. 265.00. 267.50. 270.00. 272.50. 275.00. 277.50. 280.00. 282.50. 285.00. 287.50. 290.00. 292.50. 295.00. 297.50. 300.00. 302.50. 305.00. 307.50. 310.00. 312.50. 315.00. 317.50. 320.00. 322.50. 325.00. 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BBC 1

- 6.00 Ceefax
6.30 BBC Breakfast News
9.05 Gloria Live. Gloria Hunniford's guests are Nancy Reagan biographer Kitty Kelley, Ann Cornwell who runs a helpline for anorexia, and musician Al Stewart. 9.50 Dish of the Day. Another handy recipe for those on a budget.
10.00 News, regional news and weather 10.05 Playdays. Programme for the children's lives (10.25) Bump. Cartoon about a clumsy elephant (10.35) Turnabout (10.45)
11.00 News and weather 11.05 People Today. The programme from around Britain, including medical 12.05 Rosemary Conley's Diet and Fitness Club. Fitness and health programme. 12.20 Scene Birmingham. Among the guests due are ballet star D'Arcy Buesell, comedian Shane Ritchie and film director Maynard Eziash, winner of the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. 12.55 Regional News and Weather
1.00 One O'Clock News and weather
1.30 Neighbours. (Ceefax) 1.50 Turnabout. Rob Curling presents the fast-paced quiz show.
2.15 Film: She's Dressed to Kill (1979). Eleanor Parker and Jessica Walter star in a made-for-television thriller originally titled *Who's Killing the World's Greatest Models?* When the models gather in a remote mountain mansion, a killer stalks his glamorous prey. Notable only for Eleanor Parker's hilarious pastiche of Tallulah Bankhead. With John Rubinstein, Connie Sellecca and Jim McMillin. Directed by Gus Trikonis. (Ceefax)
3.50 Pingu. Cartoon about a clumsy penguin (3.55) Mink and Mac with Michael Barrymore (4.05) The Further Adventures of SuperTed (4.20) Simon and the Witch. Episode eight of the children's series (4.35) Tricky Business. Comedy and magic with Bernie Cribben.
5.00 Newsround 5.05 Blue Peter. Informative, long-running magazine programme for children with Yvette Fielding, Diane-Louise Jordan and John Leslie. (Ceefax)
5.35 Neighbours (1). (Ceefax) Northern Ireland: Sportsweek 5.40 Inside Leisure
6.00 Six O'Clock News with Chris Lowe and Anna Ford. Weather
6.30 Regional News Magazine. Northern Ireland: Neighbours
7.00 Top of the Pops introduced by Nicky Campbell (simultaneous broadcast with Radio 1)
7.30 Eastenders. More trouble and strife with the cockney residents of Albert Square.
8.00 Tomorrow's World. A look at genetic testing, a scientific method which, in the next 30 years, will be able to determine a subject's susceptibility to inherit medical conditions such as cystic fibrosis and heart disease. Plus the launch of a four-week competition to win a trip for two to Hawaii to observe this summer's eclipse. With Judith Hann, Howard Stalford, Kate Bellingham and Peter Macann.
8.30 Russ Abbott. Matters nautical are to the fore when Russ Abbott returns with more marine impersonations and sketches (1). (Ceefax) Northern Ireland: Hidden Pursuits
9.00 Nine O'Clock News with Martyn Lewis. (Ceefax) Weather



Comedy in store: David Jason and Ronnie Barker (9.30pm)

- 9.30 Open All Hours. More laughs with the stinky, stuttering corner store owner Arkwright (Ronnie Barker), whose suspicions are raised by a mysterious stranger hanging around the neighbourhood. With David Jason and Lynda Baron (1). Northern Ireland: Question Time. Peter Sissons's guests are John Pilger and MPs Angela Rumbold, John Smith and Alan Bell.
10.00 Heartbeat: Critical Overload. Fast-paced medical drama set in a Los Angeles women's medical centre. When a crane collapses into a nearby elementary school, Joanne (Kate Mulgrew) risks her life to save a pregnant woman trapped by the debris. Meanwhile, Leo (Ben Masters) is at a critical stage in his legal battle concerning his son and ex-wife. Northern Ireland: Guinness Skies 11.50 Heartbeat
12.00 Weather
- TV VARIATIONS**
- ANGLIA**
As London except 5.10pm-5.40pm Blockbusters 5.50-7.00pm Anglia News 10.40pm Mashed with Children 11.15pm News 11.40pm Ceefax 1.10pm News 1.30pm Ceefax 1.30pm News 1.50pm Ceefax 1.50pm News 2.10pm Ceefax 2.10pm News 2.30pm Ceefax 2.30pm News 2.50pm Ceefax 2.50pm News 3.10pm Ceefax 3.10pm News 3.30pm Ceefax 3.30pm News 3.50pm Ceefax 3.50pm News 4.10pm Ceefax 4.10pm News 4.30pm Ceefax 4.30pm News 4.50pm Ceefax 4.50pm News 5.10pm Ceefax 5.10pm News 5.30pm Ceefax 5.30pm News 5.50pm Ceefax 5.50pm News 6.10pm Ceefax 6.10pm News 6.30pm Ceefax 6.30pm News 6.50pm Ceefax 6.50pm News 7.10pm Ceefax 7.10pm News 7.30pm Ceefax 7.30pm News 7.50pm Ceefax 7.50pm News 8.10pm Ceefax 8.10pm News 8.30pm Ceefax 8.30pm News 8.50pm Ceefax 8.50pm News 9.10pm Ceefax 9.10pm News 9.30pm Ceefax 9.30pm News 9.50pm Ceefax 9.50pm News 10.10pm Ceefax 10.10pm News 10.30pm Ceefax 10.30pm News 10.50pm Ceefax 10.50pm News 11.10pm Ceefax 11.10pm News 11.30pm Ceefax 11.30pm News 11.50pm Ceefax 11.50pm News 12.10pm Ceefax 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BUSINESS

THURSDAY APRIL 25 1991

Business Editor
John Bell

Lloyds has worst debt in 50 years

THE collapse of International Leisure Group has hit Lloyds Bank with its worst bad debt in about 50 years, Sir Jeremy Morse, the chairman, said. ILG's failure was the worst suffered by Lloyds since the £620,000 lost in the Hatry group of companies' crash in 1939. Lloyds had outstanding loans of more than £100 million to ILG and is unlikely to recover more than £2 million.

Sir Jeremy said the loss was probably smaller in real terms than the Hatry crash. He said the bank had provided against a substantial part of its loans to ILG in last year's figures. These included bad debt provisions of £799 million (£345 million).

Brixton rise

The rent roll at Brixton Estate rose by 23 per cent to £43.3 million last year, enabling the property company to report a 15.4 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £23.6 million. Shares rose 13p to 174p. The final dividend is increased to 4.55p (3.9p) to give a 16.4 per cent increase in the total dividend to 7.1p (6.1p).

Scottish fee

The Bank of Scotland is imposing a £10 annual fee on its credit cards from July 1, following the Royal Bank of Scotland's decision on charging announced this month. National Westminster, Britain's only major bank that has no fee, is reviewing its plastic card services and plans to announce changes this summer.

Job losses

The Banking Insurance and Finance Union has told members that the banking industry will suffer more than 50,000 job losses in the next three years under current plans among the banks.

Lilley decline

Lilley, the construction group, reported a fall in last year's profits to £14.1 million (£19.1 million). Earnings fell to 7.99p (9.55p) but the dividend is held at 2.5p.

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US dollar

1.6995 (-0.0125)
German mark
2.9742 (-0.0081)
Exchange index
91.2 (-0.5)

FT 30 Share

1952.5 (-13.3)
FT-SE 100
2488.6 (-15.2)
New York Dow Jones
2938.12 (+7.67)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave
26330.21 (-161.36)

RISER

Unitel 280p (+8p)
Morgan Crucible 340p (+8p)
Kleinwort Benson 317p (+13p)
Bristol 172p (+13p)
Campbell 334p (+22p)

FALLS

Sainsbury 82p (-13p)
Sema Group 291p (-9p)
Smithline Beech 806p (-10p)
Wolseley 726p (-19p)
Rank CG 437p (-13p)
ECC Group 410p (-15p)
Legal & General 685p (-10p)
Reliance 370p (-10p)
Castbury-Schweppes 111p (-13p)
Lax Service 196p (-13p)
Compass Group 432p (-10p)
P Bilton 383p (-14p)
Rothmans B 823p (-10p)

Closing Prices... Page 27

INTERESTS

London: Bank Base: 12%
3-month Interbank 1 1/4% 11 1/4%
3-month eligible bill 1 1/4% 11 1/4%
US: Prime Rate 9%
Federal Funds 5 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bill 5.59-5.67%
30-year bonds 5 1/2% 5 1/2%

COMMODITIES

London: New York
£ \$1.6995
£ DM1.7540
£ Sfr1.4705
£ FF10.0102
£ Yen136.10
£ Index 91.2
ECU £0.695209 SDR £1/4
£ ECU1.436416 £ SDR 1/4

London: Flaring

AM \$355.90 pm \$355.80
close \$355.75-356.25 (2208.00-209.50)
New York:
Comex \$356.45-358.95

Gold

Gold (May) \$19.90 bbl (19.75)
Denotes latest trading price

Oil

Oil (May) \$19.90 bbl (19.75)
Denotes latest trading price

Stocks

Stocks (May) \$19.90 bbl (19.75)
Denotes latest trading price

Index

Index (May) \$19.90 bbl (19.75)
Denotes latest trading price

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Index

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Denotes latest trading price

Optimistic report on world economy

IMF says cut aid for UK unemployed

From Susan Elliott in Washington

ECONOMISTS at the International Monetary Fund have suggested in their latest half-yearly report that Britain cuts the time the unemployed are entitled to benefit to boost economic recovery. But the fund is confident that Britain, America and Canada would begin to recover later this year from their recessions and enjoy "significantly positive" growth next year although the predictions for economic growth in industrialised nations this year were scaled back dramatically from the rosier-than-expected figures put out last October.

On the United Kingdom, Ernesto Hernandez-Cata, one of the authors of the report, said that cutting the time unemployment benefit was payable would encourage those out of work to "seek jobs more aggressively and perhaps increase the supply of labour".

The 140-page study predicted that unemployment in Britain would continue to rise next year, while the jobless rate in America would peak toward the middle of this year as Germany's continues to decline.

The tone of the latest World Economic Outlook was more optimistic than the one published last autumn because concerns have retreated about sharply higher oil prices arising from the Gulf war and political instability in the Middle East.

Jacob Frankel, the director of research for the report, said the swift end of the allied war against Iraq removed these concerns. On the credit crunch, a worry six months ago, he said that the increasing restriction of new lending by American banks to quality customers was "not a bad

idea", while credit availability had improved over the past couple of months. The report was released before the annual spring meeting of the fund and the World Bank in Washington. Leading financial policy-makers of the Group of Seven industrialised countries - America, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada - also meet this weekend in Washington and face the largest divergence in their economies for several years.

Mr Frankel said the fund was confident that there were sufficient differences in their economic cycles to prevent the recessions in America and Britain from spreading to other countries. He said the fund was putting a lot of emphasis on issues that link economies, such as trade and credit.

Among its most important projections, the fund report predicts that economic growth in America would grow at a rate of 2.7 per cent next year and at a marginal 0.2 per cent this year compared with last autumn's prediction that the American economy would grow by 1.7 per cent this year.

In contrast, Britain's economy is expected to shrink by 2.1 per cent this year, against forecasts the fund made of 1.3 per cent growth last autumn. But it is expected to strengthen by 1.9 per cent in 1992. The new forecasts were based on a working assumption of oil prices staying at just over \$17 per barrel this year and at about \$18 in 1992.

As a whole, the developing world's economy would grow at 0.75 per cent this year, the report said. Among the conditions favourable to a rebound in the global economy next year, the fund report cited a significant decline in interest rates in

leading industrialised countries, especially America. The report also expects a fall in the value of the dollar relative to the currencies of America's main trading partners and de-stocking by industry. But the fund said the weakness of the economies of the Soviet Union and former eastern bloc countries struggling to throw off the shackles of central planning, would remain a drag on overall world growth. Mr Frankel, however, predicted a recovery in eastern Europe by next year, as countries begin to reap the rewards of harsh economic reforms.

By far the strongest performer among leading industrialised countries is Japan, with an estimated growth rate of 3.6 per cent this year and 3.9 per cent next year. These projections, and a smaller but also robust outlook for Germany's economy, despite the costs of unification, have led to tensions between G7 members.

The Europeans have bristled at recent pressure by Nicholas Brady, the American treasury secretary, for lower interest rates out of concern that easier credit might spark higher inflation once demand recovers. □ Sterling fell against all leading currencies amid concern about the continuing weakness of the economy and the possibility of a political setback in next week's local government elections.

The pound declined by 1 1/4 pence against the dollar in spite of another round of concerted intervention by European central banks. The dollar rose one penny in London to DM1.7535, and by 1.25 cents to \$1.6995 against sterling but was little changed against the yen at ¥138.15.



A contrast in styles: Mike Smith (left) and Andrew Higginson with models Cassana and Sarah in the City yesterday

Economy 'immersed in deepening recession'

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BRITAIN'S economy is showing no signs of recovery and instead is immersed in a deep recession which will worsen still further this year, business leaders said yesterday.

Leading members of chambers of commerce, the engineering industry and the CBI were all sceptical about the forecast this week by Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, that the economy would begin to recover in the second half of this year. The CBI has previously suggested the worst of the recession might be over, but in advance of its quarterly industrial trends survey next week, CBI leaders yesterday were gloomy at their monthly council meeting.

John Banham, CBI director general, said: "The situation is bad. It's getting worse." The position facing manufacturing was "very, very serious", although the rate of deterioration had slowed. But the quarterly survey from the Association of British Chambers of Commerce (ABCC), showed that Britain is "immersed" in a deep recession with the service sector following manufacturing into deep decline.

Myles Middleton, association president, thought Mr Lamont was being over-optimistic in suggesting an early recovery, and said that the government had a "degree of responsibility" for the recession in not acting more quickly to contain the expansion of credit.

According to the association's survey of more than 7,000 companies, the biggest business survey in Europe, current domestic activity slumped badly in the first quarter of 1991, with a negative balance of -34 per cent between those manufacturers seeing more and those seeing fewer deliveries. Exports were also down to a balance of -14 per cent.

The immediate outlook is also not encouraging, with the forward-looking indicator of home orders falling badly,

from -25 to -37 per cent for manufacturing and from -17 to -27 per cent in the service sector. The association said: "It is clear the UK is not suffering from a short recession."

Investment levels, which fell only marginally in the final quarter of last year, are now much worse, with up to one in five companies planning to reduce investment. Though the survey is showing employment expectations holding steady, the chambers acknowledge that respondents had consistently underestimated their job-shedding, suggesting that further falls in employment are likely, with serious job blackspots now emerging.

The only chink of light was on business confidence, which though still negative at a balance of -1 per cent, has improved. This is probably due to the fall in interest rates and the end of the Gulf war, coupled with a hope that things cannot get much worse. Further gloom came from the latest six-monthly survey from the Engineering Employers' Federation, which said any real recovery was unlikely until at least mid-1992 and that another 80,000 jobs were likely to go in the engineering industry by next year. The federation's survey showed that current indicators and future forecasts for output, exports, productivity and employment in the engineer-

ing industry were all declining. Engineering output volume fell 8 per cent between the first half of 1990 and the same point this year, and the federation is forecasting it to fall a further 2 per cent to 1992. Taking its employment forecast for 1991-2 and already-falling job levels this year, the EEF said that by spring 1992 about 210,000 jobs would have gone - more than 10 per cent of the engineering workforce.

Labour party leaders used the survey to attack the government. John Smith, shadow chancellor, said they showed the economy to be in "deep and damaging" recession, while Gordon Brown, industry spokesman, said the "devastating" indictment exposed the government's "botched economic stewardship" under Mr Major and the Chancellor.

CBI leaders have called on Mr Brown to address their council next month, but they would not go so far yesterday as to attack the government directly over the economy. They confirmed that at the EEF's request, a working party between the two organisations had been set up to examine the possibility of creating a single, powerful voice to represent manufacturing. The working group will report in the autumn, but EEF leaders denied the move presaged the end of the federation, the largest single-industry body in the UK.

Cuts in fashion at Laura Ashley

By Graham Searjeant, Financial Editor

SMALL flowers are still in, but Laura Ashley's autumn collection is branching out to tempt the developing tastes of its fans, even if it will never appeal to power dressers.

Laura Ashley Holdings made an increased loss of £6.7 million on sales of £328 million in the year to end-January and its dividend has been cut to a nominal 0.1p, which chairman Sir Bernard Ashley, whose family still controls 59 per cent of the group, will waive. Yet the group's executives at last have something to smile about.

Cash injections, sales of peripheral businesses, factory closures and internal savings should cut interest by £9 million this year and cashflow from trading should be positive. "We said we would do these things and have gone out and done them," says Andrew Higginson, who became finance director a year ago.

Mike Smith, who is acting as chief executive while Sir Bernard and his board pursue a shortlist drawn from 500 candidates, says he hopes the group will make a modest profit this year even though trading in Britain, which still accounts for more than 40 per cent of sales, is still at the levels seen in the poor Christmas half.

Tempus, page 23

British firms win slice of \$65bn fighter contracts

By Martin Waller

THREE British companies have won a slice of the \$65 billion programme to build America's next generation of advanced jet fighters, the biggest aerospace contract ever awarded.

The three are GEC Avionics, of Rochester, Kent, which has won a potential \$300 million of work providing pilot's displays and flight controls, Dowty Aerospace Yakima, part of the Dowty Group, and Kidde-Graviner, of Slough, Berkshire, which is owned by Williams Holdings.

Their exact involvement will only be detailed by the United States Air Force next week, but all three appear on the 26-strong list of first-tier contractors announced by the USAF, all having contributed to the building of the two YF-22 prototype aircraft that flew a three-month test programme

at Edward Air Force Base, California, last autumn.

The three main contractors are the American corporations Lockheed, Boeing and General Dynamics, Pratt & Whitney, part of United Technologies, will supply the engines. The funds to start full-scale development of the F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter, which will provide America with its top-rank air intercepter well into the next century, will be forthcoming in July.

The USAF plans to buy up to 750 planes, taking 48 a year at the programme's peak. The share of this taken by GEC Avionics totals \$300 million over that period. The other two contracts are rather smaller. Dowty says it expects by the end of the year to receive a formal contract for as much as \$20 million to provide locking and unlocking actuators to the

craft from its factory near Seattle, Washington State.

Kidde, once owned by Hanson and bought by Williams in 1988, will provide engine fire protection. Exact value of the work won is unknown, but it is likely to be in the same area as the Dowty contract.

A contract, won by GEC Avionics, for fly-by-wire computers for the new Boeing 777 wide-bodied jet will initially be worth more than £45 million, the companies confirmed yesterday. The 15-year deal could eventually be worth more than £200 million (Ross Timman writes).

Selection of GEC technology for the first Boeing plane in which movements of control surfaces are directed remotely by computer is a commercial breakthrough for Avionics' parent, the General Electric Company.

Whiz-kids lost me my company

By Ross Timman, Industrial Correspondent

SIR John Clark, the former chief executive of Plessey, yesterday added to the growing pressure for measures to deter opportunistic takeovers with a call for predators to prove that "two and two makes a multiple way beyond normal arithmetic".

His mathematical challenge would form the final hurdle in an eight-fence barrier which, Sir John contended, hostile bidders should have to surmount to succeed. The list formed part of a statement submitted by Sir John in evidence to the House of Commons trade and industry committee and carries the same thrust as that given a week ago by Sir Antony Pilkington, chairman of Pilkington, the glass maker.

Both Sir John and Sir Antony speak with the authority of company heads who successfully fought off takeovers, although, in Sir John's case, a consortium bid by the General Electric and Siemens of Germany eventually prevailed.

Sir John looked back yesterday at that October 1989 defeat and charged that the fate of Plessey had been sealed by 35 young fund managers who "don't know one end of a shop floor from the other".



Sir John: takeover bids destructive

He said pressures for short term performance and ignorance of high technology industry left fund managers ill-equipped to be arbiters of Britain's place in world semi-conductor markets. As a result, he said, British electronics would be a "cottage industry" in 20 years.

"The higher the technology, the more difficult it is to make people understand what it is you are doing," he told the committee. "If you are talking about a meal, or a motorcycle, it is something we can all relate to. If you are talking about

gallium arsenide, it is boring." Research into the use of gallium arsenide instead of silicon for making computer chips was one of Plessey's technical strengths. Sir John said that the work had been halted since the takeover, and many of the research team had left.

Undertakings to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the Office of Fair Trading by the bidders were unenforceable, he said, yet they enabled the bidders to succeed at a price below the company's break-up value.

Sir John said the cost to Plessey of fighting off takeovers over four years could have totalled £40 million in professional fees. Bids were a distraction, not a spur to management, he said.

Sir John argued that takeover rules should require hostile bidders to exercise "due diligence" in eight areas. He said predators should have to establish genuine synergy and mutual benefit, show what would be achieved financially, and illustrate extra spending for research and development and marketing. They should also show that improvements in R&D and marketing time scales would be achieved, and that employees would benefit.

Comment, page 23

Brixton Estate

international investors in commercial property
ANNUAL RESULTS 1990

	1990 £000's	1989 £000's
Net Rental Income	43,319	35,705
Profit before Taxation	23,575	20,427
Earnings per Share	10.79p	9.45p
Net Asset Value per Share	246p	279p
Value of Investment Properties	£702m	£711m

- 21.3% increase in net rental income.
- 15.4% increase in profit before tax.
- 14.2% increase in earnings per share.
- 11.8% decrease in net asset value per share.
- Final dividend of 4.55p per Ordinary Share proposed, making a total dividend for the year of 7.10p per share - an increase of 16.4%.

The above figures constitute an abridged version of the year's results. The full accounts which will be posted to shareholders on 17th May 1991 have not yet been reported on by the Auditors. They will be filed with the Registrar of Companies following the Annual General Meeting to be held on 12th June 1991.

Brixton Estate

Rate cuts lead to rise of £629m in mortgages

By Sara McConnell

THE Building Societies Association said mortgage commitments rose £629 million to £3,497 million last month, a sign that the housing market was recovering after the falls in base rates and subsequent mortgage rate cuts of the last two months.

Gross advances were £675 million higher than in February at £3,356 million. Mark Boland, director general of the BSA, said: "Lending should pick up over the next few months in response to the reduction in mortgage rates."

The Halifax and the Nationwide, the two largest building societies, said they had seen an increase in activity after the mortgage rate cuts. Dick Spelman, general manager, marketing, at the Halifax said: "There has been a gradual recovery in the level of lending, but it has been steady rather than dramatic. There are signs that confidence is beginning to return to the market."

Nationwide said: "We have seen some increase in activity but the main impact of the cuts is yet to come. There are signs that confidence is beginning to return to the market."

But savers withdrawing funds to buy shares in the privatised electricity generating companies led to a slight fall in building society receipts from £608 million to £543 million last month.

However, Mr Boland said net receipts for the first quarter of this year were £970 million higher, at £2,085 million, than in the same quarter last year. The association said this was because societies had increased their average rates on savings accounts in the first quarter of 1991 to match those of their competitors.

In the first quarter of 1991, the average building society account paid 0.3 per cent less than the money market rate, but in 1990, the difference between the average building society account and the money market rate was a full 1.3 per cent.

Barry Reed, the chairman, said the start of this year had been the worst he could remember. "It would be unrealistic to expect any real improvement until the second half."

Austin Reed declines

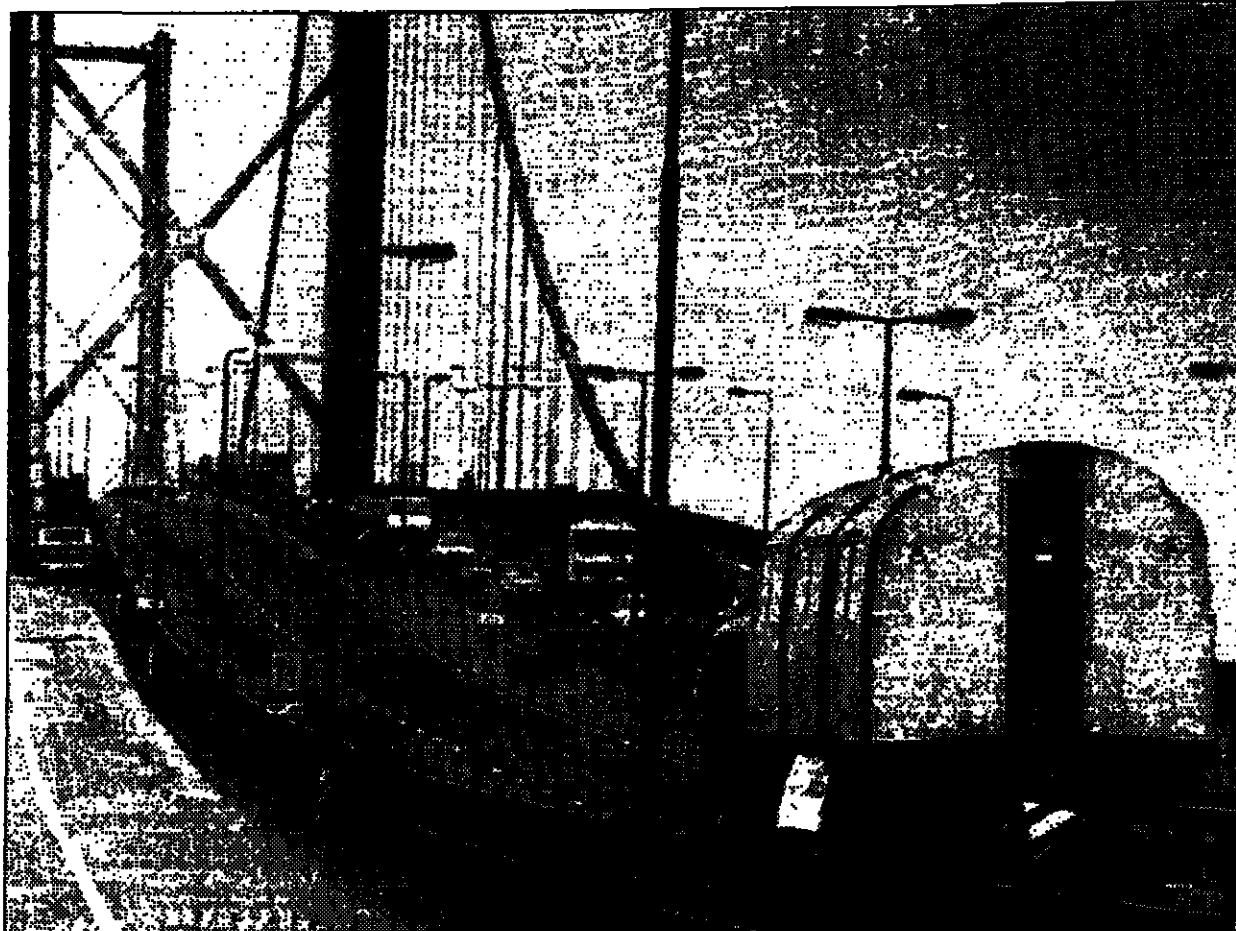
By Graham Searjeant

TURNOVER at Austin Reed, the clothing retailer and manufacturer, fell 8 per cent to £78.4 million in the year to end-January after a poor second half. Pre-tax profits tumbled to £3.6 million (£6.9 million). The manufacturing side, which includes Stephens Brothers shirts and Chester Barrie suits, held up better than retailing, thanks to improved exports.

Closure of the Cashmere of Scotland chain in America, which made a trading loss of £500,000 in the first half, led to an extraordinary debit of £1.3 million in the second.

Earnings fell to 9.5p (17.3p) a share, equal to the maintained dividend.

Barry Reed, the chairman, said the start of this year had been the worst he could remember. "It would be unrealistic to expect any real improvement until the second half."



Off-the-rails carriage journeys Forth

THE final carriage in the first of 105 London Underground train sets to be refurbished at Rosyth Royal Dockyard, Fife, crossed the Forth Road Bridge yesterday on its way to the yard (Ross Tiesman writes).

The 60ft carriages, each weighing up to

28½ tonnes, are being transported by road because the first stage of the rebuilding work, already completed, has left them unfit to run on rails.

In total, 738 carriages used on London Underground's Victoria, Northern and Bakerloo lines will be repainted at the

yard and have new interiors installed.

The £20 million contract is part of a drive by Babcock Thorn, which runs the yard under a management contract, to reduce dependence upon naval ship refurbishment. Work has already been completed for British Rail and ScotRail.

Olivetti halts payout after profits slide

OLIVETTI, the Italian computer maker, scrapped the dividend in response to a sharp fall in net profits, from £202.8 million to £60.4 million (£27 million) last year (Wolfgang Münchau writes).

Carlo de Benedetti, the chairman, said the current year outlook was unpredictable. Nearly all European computer makers are suffering from the downturn and Siemens Nixdorf, Bull and Philips are cutting excess capacity.

Olivetti hopes to save £540 million from 10,000 redundancies over two years.

Ashtead seeks £6m and gives warning

By Martin Barrow

ASHTHEAD Group, the plant hire company, is asking shareholders for £5.8 million through a rights issue, while warning them that taxable profits will be halved to just £4 million in the current year.

The company is offering one new share for every four held at 135p a share. Existing shares fell 2p to 158p despite the cash call and promise of a final dividend of not less than 3.025p a share, making 4.125p (3.75p) for the year to April.

Proceeds of the cash call, £7.8 million last year,

underwritten by Barclays de Zoete Wedd, will be used to reduce borrowings and fund further acquisitions. The company ended the last financial year with gearing of 83 per cent, up from 53 per cent, and there is no immediate prospect of borrowings being reduced from cash flow.

Ashtead had pre-tax profits of £2.51 million at half time and expects no more than £1.49 million in the second half. The company earned £7.8 million last year.

Trust adds to sugar holding

From Brian Buchanan in Sydney

BANKERS Trust Australia has built its potential blocking stake in Bundaberg Sugar to 6.7 per cent and is confident that Tate & Lyle will have to raise its takeover offer again, past Aus\$4.10 (£1.86) a share.

Bankers Trust said it had spent Aus\$4.7 million, lifting its holding from 3.25 per cent. The Bundaberg board has been fighting the Aus\$321 million Tate & Lyle offer for more than a month.

Ross Finley, investment manager and director for the trust, said the institution had bought more than 1 per cent of the sugar firm's stock on the market since Tuesday. Shares closed at Aus\$3.96 yesterday.

Tate & Lyle acquired 5,500 Bundaberg shares to take its company stake to 2.8 per cent. The offer is valid to May 17.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Maxwell resigns from Central & Sheerwood

ROBERT Maxwell, who stepped down as chairman of Maxwell Communication, his main public company, last month, is resigning as chairman from Central & Sheerwood, the engineering and property business he rescued four years ago. At the same time, Central is buying three engineering firms, TransTec, Lock and PSS, for £9.85 million in cash and shares. Two of the companies are owned by Headington Investments, Mr Maxwell's private company.

The acquisitions will dilute Central's earnings per share from 0.62p to 0.4p on a pro forma basis. The company will be run by Geoffrey Robinson, MP for Coventry North-West. The Maxwell family's stake will be increased from 20.7 to 27.2 per cent, while Mr Robinson will hold 28.1 per cent. The company will also change its name to Transfer Technology Group.

Sovereign to buy 5% stake

SOVEREIGN Oil & Gas has agreed to buy a 5 per cent interest in the Victor gas field, off the Lincolnshire coast, from an affiliate of Mobil North Sea for \$30 million, subject to partners' pre-emption rights. The company reported an increase in net income from £508,000 to £2.73 million for last year. Earnings were 4.9p a share, against 0.9p. There is again no dividend.

Aran raises N Sea interest

ARAN Energy, the Irish oil and gas company, has increased its interest in the North Sea Alba field from 3 per cent to 5 per cent through an asset swap with Conoco (UK). Aran's net income for 1990, including a tax credit of £1.1 million, was £239,000 (£349,000), compared with £264,000 for 1989. Earnings were 0.19p a share, against 0.40p. There is again no dividend.

Furniture store slides

WORLD of Leather, the USM-quoted furniture retailer, has axed its dividend after suffering a net profit increase in pre-tax losses to £323,000 (£38,000) in the year to end-December. Interest costs jumped to £536,000 (£158,000).

Ramon Benardout, chairman and joint managing director, blamed the downturn on the decline in consumer spending and difficult trading conditions, caused by high interest rates. Turnover rose slightly, to £24.5 million (£23.2 million), due to additional selling space. With no final dividend (0.8p), making a total of nil (1.6p), the shares lost 2p to 21p.

Sale rumours affect Ibox

SHARES in Ibox Holdings, the Birmingham recruitment agency, fell 7p to 11p after news that the group is involved in possible bid talks for Ibox's entire issued capital at a "materially lower" share price than the current one. Last year, Ibox slashed its interim dividend to 1p (1.9p) after a collapse in pre-tax profits to £7,000 (£1.09 million) in the six months to end-June 1990.

Profits fall but CI sales rise

CI GROUP, the Wolverhampton steel engineering products company, saw pre-tax profits fall from £7.77 million to £4.83 million in the year to end-January, in spite of a rise in turnover to £93.7 million (£83.6 million). Operating profits were £5.64 million (£5.31 million). Earnings per share fell to 3.77p (5.93p). The final dividend is kept at 1.225p, making 2.05p, unchanged.

Hopkinsons static

HOPKINSONS Group is maintaining its final dividend after a difficult second half. The Huddersfield valve maker, emerging from lengthy restructuring, recommends a final of 2.5p, making 3.7p (3.5p) for the year to end-January.

Full-year pre-tax profits were unchanged at £6.72 million in spite of an increase in investment income from £1.02 million to £2.02 million. At the halfway stage, profits were 19 per cent higher but customer demand was depressed in the final six months. Continuing businesses increased turnover from £38.9 million to £42.37 million.

Hardy Oil calls for £27.6m

By Martin Barrow

HARDY Oil and Gas is calling on shareholders for £27.6 million to fund further exploration and development.

The company, demerged from Trafalgar House, the building and shipping conglomerate, in 1989, announced a rights issue of one new share for every four held at 160p each. Existing shares fell from 197p to 191p.

Hardy expects to participate

in 46 exploratory wells in 10 countries this year and said the money is for exploration and development, particularly on the American Gulf coast.

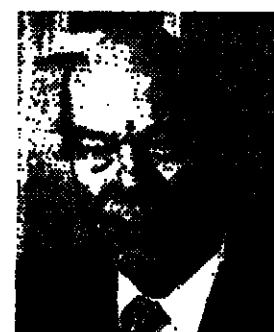
The company estimated that net income for the year to the end of March was £10.1 million, including petroleum revenue tax credits of £4 million. Net income was £5.05 million for the previous 12 months. Payment of a maiden

dividend will be considered for the year to end-March 1992.

Although it was too early to forecast this year's outcome, Hardy said lower oil prices would have an adverse impact, but a higher contribution from the sale of gas from Ravenspurn North gas field in the North Sea would provide stability in the event of volatility in oil markets.

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Sir Eric Pountain, Group Chairman

TURNOVER

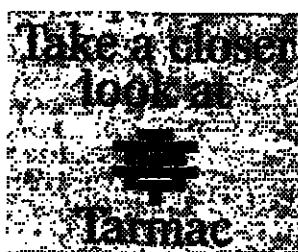
£3,695.0

PRE-TAX PROFIT

£190.0

EARNINGS PER SHARE

16.5



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Copies of the 1990 Report and Accounts will be available on May 14 from the Secretary, Tarmac PLC, Hilton Hall, Hilton Lane, Essington, Wolverhampton WV11 2BQ

Dencora slumps to £2.2m

PRE-TAX profits at Dencora, the property group, slumped to £2.21 million (£7.06 million) in the year to end-December, while the net asset value fell to 280p (336p).

John Bushell, the chairman, said reductions in interest rates should "encourage a better level of activity in the market in the second half."

Earnings per share fell to 7p (25.6p), with fully diluted earnings at 7.7p (21.6p). There is a maintained single dividend of 5.5p for the year.

Robert Hyde & Sons

On 4th January, 1989 we reported that William Cook had bought the manufacturing interest of Robert Hyde. That report contained a number of inaccuracies about the purchase and the previous management takeover of Robert Hyde. We regret the inaccuracies and any resulting misunderstanding or embarrassment to the management of Robert Hyde.

Dredging dips

British Dredging, the builders suppliers, showed a drop in pre-tax profits to £3.45 million (£4 million) last year. The final dividend is 4.8p (4.4p), for a total of 7.4p (7p). Shares rose 9p to 127p.

Bid still open

Fuchs, the German lubricants group, has declared its £46.2 million offer for Century Oils unconditional. Fuchs has 57 per cent acceptance so far and the offer, raised from 110p to 145p per share earlier this month, remains open until further notice.

COMPANY BRIEFS

SHAW GROUP (Int)	Last time's profit was £755,000.
Pre-tax: £754,000	Interim dividend, 1.5p (1.6p).
EPS: 3.5p (3.3p)	Turnover, £5.92m (£5.52m).
JESSUP (Int)	Last time's profit was £975,000.
Pre-tax: £189,000	Dividend, 1.5p (2.25p).
LPS: 3.94p (EPS: 5p)	Turnover fell to £45m (£48m).
FIRST CHARLOTTE (Fin)	Last time's net income: £220,000.
Net income: £194,000	Net asset value, 9.77p (12.2p).
EPS: 0.20p (0.22p)	Dividend, 0.2p (0.2p).
LONDON AMERICAN	Final results. No dividend.
Pre-tax: £36,000	Last time's loss was £122,000.
LPS: 0.04p (EPS: 0.07p)	Net asset value, 57.31p (58.41p).

RECENT ISSUES

EQUITIES	Seton Healthcare	178
Aberdeen Ltd	Smallcap	79
Alpine Group	Stand Platform (225p)	160-10
Alpine Resources	Trio Int Ltd	42
Aberforth (100p)	Unicom (100p)	188-2
Alliance Res	Wig Tye App	228-1
Archant Res (155p)	See main prices page for Elec shares	
CMW Group (30p)		
Castle Cash (60p)		
Dayton Blue Corp		
EFM Java Ltd (50p)		
East German Inv		
Edco (100p)		
Enronbank		
Europe Energy		
Highcroft Inv		
Invergordon (135p)		
Leverport (108p)		
MACE		
MMI (20p)		
Malaysia Capital		
Midland Radio		
Probus Int (84p)		

TRADITIONAL OPTIONS

First Dealings	Last Dealings	Last Dealings	For Settlement
April 22	May 2	July 25	August 5
Call options were taken out on 24/4/91	Call options were taken out on 24/4/91	Call options were taken out on 24/4/91	Call options were taken out on 24/4/91
Asset, Premier, Rosemount, Capital & Security, Tulow Oil, Tuller Resources, Peter McCarthy & Stone, Scitex, Decham, Pat & Cals Thomson.			

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Vintage MacColl

BREWERY sector guru, or MacColl, much mired during his 15-month RMC corporate finance & Corporate Broking Services has decided to return to first love - mainstream stock market. With effect from Monday, MacColl, aged 49 and once a director of KJ and Penson, will be taking a new position in the St. Ives at Hill offices of Henderson Crosthwaite, an agency for research, already well respected for its research capability. "They already have the number one analyst in food manufacturing and retailing, number three analyst in packaging, and a presence in oils, electrical and leisure," says MacColl with his old enthusiasm for establishing a press in the drinks sector and it will be synergy between associations there and leisure and food manufacturing teams. The director's results season be in the middle of next year and MacColl points out that Britain's six largest drink companies have a combined £1 billion. He also points out his career has now gone in a circle - when he first arrived in London from his Edinburgh in the mid-Seventies he worked for Penson Crosthwaite, which merged with George Hen

Time to rethink merger policy

COMMENT

John Major's government is clearly determined to present a softer face of Conservatism to the electorate. The U turns on the community charge and child benefit were but two examples of a clear break with Thatcherite philosophies. Will competition policy be the next?

Excesses of the mid Eighties takeover boom have damaged public perception of the hard line laid down by successive trade secretaries. Stripped of the rhetoric, this stated that, subject to cases of paramount national interest takeovers should be judged principally by their effect on competition. Criteria such as research, regional employment and efficiency were also-runs during the Thatcher years. Policies that produced corporate horrors such as Coloroll, scandals such as Guinness and Blue Arrow and bloated financial workings such as WPP and Saatchi & Saatchi find few defenders these days.

In the United States, where there is still a light rein on aggressive takeover artists, the merger mania of the Eighties gave us Ivan Boesky, Michael

Milken and piles of near worthless junk bonds.

In Britain and even the City, which flourished mightily if temporarily on the fees and commissions of the takeover boom, gentler thoughts are being aired and Whitehall is listening hard.

Last week, the trade and industry select committee heard Sir Antony Pilkington describe the damaging effects of continuing takeover speculation on his family glassmaking business and his plea that bidders should be compelled to publish an enforceable prospectus of intentions for would-be takeover targets.

It struck a chord with those who recalled the promises given by Ernest Saunders to headquarter the combined Guinness/Distillers organisation in Edinburgh and to appoint Sir Thomas Risk as chairman, though it must be said that Guinness shareholders allowed Mr Saunders to unwind these

pledges within months. GEC and Siemens also substantially reworked their plans for cooperation after they took control of Plessey, though both claimed pressing commercial reasons for so doing.

Sir John Clark, Plessey's former chairman, told yesterday's session of the committee that some takeovers are too important to be left solely to the judgment of shareholders.

Sir John can be stigmatised as a biased witness. But his contention that takeover rules should be tougher is gaining ground.

New legislation is not even necessary. The public interest criteria are already enshrined in law.

The weighting of these criteria during the process of approval by the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers

Commission is the route towards a new regime. Opponents of market capitalism would go further and shift the burden of proof, requiring companies to demonstrate benefits before a merger is allowed. But few would argue that it is now appropriate to redefine the public interest in corporate takeovers rather more widely.

Own goal

Gerald Ratner's competitors might have rubbed their hands at the thought of Britain's biggest jeweller ruining the family brand name overnight. The biggest competitor is, however, Mr Ratner, who also runs the bigger H Samuel chain as well as Zales, Watches of Switzerland and enough others to

control a third of the British market and make Ratners Group the biggest retail jeweller in the world.

The stock market seems to share Mr Ratner's assumption, at least before the event, that it would do no harm to let the public know that he thought much of what he sells is rubbish and that his customers are tasteless. Only 12 per cent of the group's sales and 10 per cent of profits come through shops trading as Ratners.

Even in these terms, the impulsive Mr Ratner miscalculated on the grand scale, perhaps thinking that a speech in the Albert Hall constituted a discreet private occasion. If his customers are tasteless, they are surely not so stupid as to think they will now impress their peers or lift their own spirits by buying trinkets from Ratners, and the punk market of a decade and more ago is hardly booming today. At the least, therefore, the

entire Ratners chain might have to be rebranded.

Any corner shop owner knows you do not prosper by telling your customers you despise them. A deeper question is whether you can prosper in the long run if you despise them in private. Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury and, of late, Tesco have shown that identifying with customers and their lifestyles is a key to gaining and keeping profitable market share.

Mr Ratner has boosted not only his own sales but the whole trade by taking jewellery down market. Verdict Research, the retailing specialists, said he has made "a significant contribution to the turnaround in the fortunes of jewellery trading," turning a sleepy corner into one of the most dynamic retailing sectors.

Will this last? Ratners had a policy of giving people their money back if goods were returned within 30 days, but is having to restrict this after much increased returns to save costs. His gaffe could mark the high point of the discretionary spender's brief love affair with cheap trinkets.

The single currency soufflé sinks as Kohl cools the pace



Shrugging off the details: Jacques Delors sounded as if it was all over bar the signing

FOR 11 members of the European Community, 1990 was the year of acceleration towards the historic goal of a single currency. But 1991 is turning into the year of backpedalling.

Italy, holding the community chairmanship during the second half of last year, bulldozed an ambitious framework and timetable through two summits in alliance with Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission. Britain sat on the sidelines.

The Italians completed their dash by inaugurating two special conferences, which were to write new treaties for monetary and political union.

M Delors sounded as if he believed that the monetary meetings would be technical exercises designed merely to fill in the blanks left by the EC leaders' communiques.

In making a single currency, there is no useful distinction between fine print and broad principle. Every syllable of the treaty is important, from the visionary preamble to the last footnote.

The conclusions of the two Rome summits left gaps large enough for a determined negotiator to drive a bus through - which is precisely what Germany then proceeded to do.

Several other governments with quite different agendas, Britain included, then followed them through the hole. The whole pace slowed to a speed described by one delegate as that of an "academic seminar or common room".

Questions that were thought closed have been reopened and new ones broached. Large gaps are still to be bridged.

No common positions yet exist on how economic convergence should be monitored and judged; on the functions of the central bank in the second stage; and on the degree of independence of the proposed European central bank.

Spain has played an early wild card by threatening to hold both treaty conferences hostage to its demand for large resource transfers from north to south. The net result of the entire negotiation since December has been to send

monetary union backwards, not forwards.

At the end of this month, the more pragmatic Luxembourg presidency will offer a complete draft treaty, which will try to split all the remaining differences.

Since these largely concern issues thought to have been settled last year, M Delors and his supporters will not like this treaty any more than they like the draft political treaty which

has just hit the table. But the most that Luxembourg can hope to do is to define a handful of key disputes that will then have to be horse-traded when the next EC summit comes round in June.

The whole treaty turns on Germany, where policy is made by a group of key players ranging from Europhiles to the ultra-sceptical. Hans-Dietrich Genscher's foreign ministry is the keenest to stick to the

prescriptions written by the Delors committee report and the Rome summits.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl is almost equally keen to remain *communautaire* but does not always declare his hand until the last moment. The finance ministry under Theo Waigel is more cautious than both of them.

Karl-Otto Pöhl of the Bundesbank is openly critical of anything that looks like being less rigorous than the

system over which he already presides.

Just at the moment, the fluid movements of the German political system favour the finance men: Chancellor Kohl's standing has been weakened by the scale of his party's defeat in the Rhineland-Palatinate.

Mr Pöhl's leverage increases as the scale of the economic catastrophe in the east grows daily worse. Herr Kohl will certainly come under pressure to show more willing tonight when he visits President François Mitterrand for a regular tête-à-tête.

The centre of the storm has always been "stage two" - the open-ended period during which currencies and economies are supposed to converge ready for a single currency in stage three.

Yesterday, the Luxembourg presidency proposed what would in effect be an extra stage. It suggested that the central bank be delayed until 1996, trying to find a compromise between the strict French interpretation of last year's declarations - which can be read to mean that it should begin in 1994 - and the German contention that it should not start until the third and final stage.

The flux has been good for the strange British position. Technically, Britain accepts none of the conference's terms of reference while taking full part in the deliberations. Yet Nigel Wickes, the Treasury delegate, has from time to time found himself offering peace formulas for France and Germany.

The discussions have produced one crucial consensus: that there should be a waiting room for countries that cannot move at the speed of the others.

One delegate defined the rough agreement as: no country can stop one group going ahead to the next stage.

But no country can be compelled to move if it is not ready. No country can insist on going ahead if it is plain to the rest that its economy cannot take the strain.

GEORGE BROCK
Brussels

TEMPUS

New designs and prices must shape Ashley line

LAURA Ashley's brand name is still much loved by customers who have given up buying its goods, the group's market research found. The new management now has the task of rediscovering a price, quality and design formula that will turn this goodwill back into profits.

At least the group has stopped disappointing the stock market. The £6.7 million pre-tax loss, though appalling, was expected as conditions in the high street compounded long-standing internal problems to produce a second-half operating loss.

However, the impact of tighter financial controls is impressive. The £29 million cash injection of new share capital from Aeon of Japan accounted for much of the fall in borrowings from £87 million to £23 million, cutting gearing to about 27 per cent.

At the same time, however, stocks in continuing businesses were cut by 24 per cent and finances benefited from selling peripheral businesses. Interest charges on the refinanced borrowings should, therefore, fall from £12.4 million to about £3 million.

Under the new policy of consolidating fully owned businesses to improve returns per square foot, cash will not be thrown about this year.

Planned capital spending of £10 million compares with depreciation of £17 million.

Costs of closing six garment works, completed at the end of March, have already been provided and there is greater determination to control costs at the remaining manufacturing sites in Wales, which will now produce only about a quarter of final sales.

The shares are looking for more than this, however. At 80p, they sell at about 11 times earnings in the good years and this will not be one of them. The bad times may be over. For good times to return, the brand must be made to work through new designs and price policies.

The big test for this will not come until the spring of 1992. Meantime, the shares depend on hope and confidence in the brand's international value.

Brixton Estate

SHARES in Brixton Estate celebrated impressive results by rising more than 8 per cent, in these days a far from common event in properties.

But then Brixton is a far from commonplace company. Its most impressive feature is how well its investment portfolio is performing in the worst property market for years. Douglas Gardner, the managing director, said bad debts cost Brixton just £10,000 to £15,000 last year, an indication of high quality tenants.

The rents these tenants paid last year rose 21 per cent to £43.3 million. But with no contribution from dealing, pre-tax profits lagged behind rents, rising by 15.4 per cent to £23.6 million. The final dividend rises to 4.55p (3.9p), giving a total of 7.1p (6.1p).

Brixton is not immune to the downward pressure on property values, but the quality of its tenant base enables it to perform better than most. Throughout its portfolio, the Jones Lang Wootton valuations are just that little bit better than those reported by rivals. The end result is a net asset value per share at the top end of expectations, falling only 12 per cent to 246p.

This year should see the £100 million development programme drawing to a temporary close, with the £40 mil-



Bridge-builder: Lilley's Rankin looks to the future

lion still to be spent placing little strain on the year-end gearing of 66 per cent. The property market will not run away this year and Brixton will do well to maintain its asset value. At 174p, the quality is fairly reflected by a 30 per cent discount.

Lilley

LILLEY has wisely resisted any temptation to follow its peers in the construction sector and tap the market for cash. With gearing stubbornly high at 98 per cent and margins still under pressure that temptation must have been great indeed. But after the unsuccessful and costly bid for Tilbury last year, Lilley sensibly perceived the need to rebuild bridges to the City.

Last year, the cost of carrying the near 30 per cent stake in Tilbury was £5.3 million while a further £8.41 million was written off as an extraordinary charge after the disposal of the shares at a loss.

That took the total cost over two years to £18.6 million, a huge drain on a medium-sized company capitalised at £80 million.

The fact that Lilley has survived to tell the tale is a tribute of sorts to the management. Last year, taxable profits fell from £19 million to £14.1 million but this was no worse than was expected considering market conditions. A sharply reduced tax charge softened the impact on earnings, down to 7.99p (9.55p) a share. The total dividend is maintained at 2.5p with a 1.5p final.

Lilley sought Tilbury in order to broaden its geographical spread but its concentration in Scotland and northern England has helped it avoid the worst effects of the recession. The market will be happy with profits of £15 million this year, leaving the shares unchanged at 49p, on a prospective p/e of 5.5. Good value for those betting on a prompt economic recovery.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Vintage MacColl

BREWERY sector guru Victor MacColl, much missed during his 15-month foray into corporate finance with Corporate Broking Services, has decided to return to his first love - mainstream stockbroking. With effect from Monday, MacColl, aged 47, and once a director of Kleinwort Benson, will be taking up a new position in the St Mary at Hill offices of Henderson Crosthwaite, an agency broker that is already well respected for its research capabilities. "They already have the number one analyst in food manufacturing and retailing, the number three analyst in paper and packaging, and a firm presence in oil, electricals and leisure," says MacColl, with his old enthusiasm. "I will be establishing a presence in the drinks sector and there will be synergy between my associations there and the leisure and food manufacturing teams." The drinks sector's results season begins in the middle of next month and MacColl points out that Britain's six largest drink companies have a combined market capitalisation of £27 billion. He also points out that his career has now gone full circle - when he first arrived in London from his native Edinburgh in the mid-Seventies he worked for Penn & Crosthwaite, which later merged with George Hender-

son. "I worked in the same room as Perry Crosthwaite and he was my best man when I married my wife, Rosemary, in 1978," Perry Crosthwaite, a member of the firm's founding family, is now in charge of the dealing room at Henderson Crosthwaite. "It is all pure coincidence," insists the ever popular MacColl.

Walk this way

HISTORY repeats itself next month when some of the City's hardier souls tackle the London to Brighton Race Walk - an annual event in the Stock Exchange calendar since 1902. Tackling the race for the first time as a team are Malcolm Slaughter, a market-maker at UBS Phillips & Drew and his son, Andrew, who works in the firm's bond department. Malcolm first tackled the race in 1962 with his father Tod - well-known

for his time at Pinchin Denny, the jobber, and a past chairman of the Stock Exchange Athletic Club, which organises the event. "We are not going to be breaking any records," says Malcolm, aged 50, who, nevertheless, hopes to complete the 53-mile course within 12 hours. The present club chairman, Sandy Johnston of Greig Middleston, hopes to rally 100 entrants to the start line, in Westminster, on May 18. "This has always been a City affair, but the fragmentation of the City means we're losing touch with tradition," says Johnston, who works on the convertibles desk at Greig Middleston. "It's a serious challenge, and we'd like to see a hundred or so entrants."

NOTICE on a church notice-board in Leicester: "Chicken dinner next Saturday - come in for a wing and a prayer."

Mills on the wing

BARBARA Mills, the high-profile director of the Serious Fraud Office, is in Frankfurt today on only her second official trip abroad since taking office last September. Last night, she addressed the British Chamber of Commerce in Germany, following in the footsteps of Sir Geoffrey Howe and Sir Leon Brittan. Today, she is due to visit the Bundesbank and dine at the Frankfurt Stock Exchange before flying back to Britain this

evening. Some mutual tips on how to catch high-flying fraudsters may be in order...

That's a deal

NEIL Stapley, managing director of NatWest Stockbrokers, enjoyed a taste of the showbiz lifestyle on Tuesday when he handed over a cheque for £76,691 to Esther Rantzen, star of the BBC's *That's Life*. The money - for ChildLine, the charity founded by Rantzen for children in trouble or danger - was raised from the postal dealing service launched to coincide with the electricity privatisation. NatWest agreed to put a pound aside for every deal executed.

Baltic base

THE City Gym - the oldest health club in the Square Mile - has moved after a 17-year spell in Britannia House, BP's imposing headquarters off Moorgate. The club has set up shop in the basement of the Baltic Exchange, a stone's throw from Lloyd's of London. The move may shame over-lunched brokers into donning their togs. "A lot of these new gyms have gone out of business after three or four years," says Alistair Murray, who founded the gym in 1952 and steps down today as managing director. "A lot more younger people in the City seem to be exercising now," he adds. Murray, a former Olympic and British national weightlifting coach,

All that glisters

Timing, chaps, timing... Gritting his teeth over Gerald Ratner's remarks about his products was Paul Deacon, retail analyst at Goldman Sachs. For no sooner had Deacon issued a "buy" recommendation on the Ratners stock than the chairman made his fateful comments - casting some doubt over future sales, not to mention profits. "He's said it before, but the difference is he said it to a much wider audience," says Deacon, putting on a brave face. "It's just not helpful. He's achieved tens of millions of pounds of negative publicity in one fell swoop." Ratners shares rose 2p on the news - proof, perhaps, that honesty is the best policy. It has emerged, meanwhile, that Ratners was fined £65 by a court in Northern Ireland yesterday for opening its store at Danganannon, Co Tyrone, on a Sunday, during a short-lived campaign of defiance of Ulster's chaotic Sabbath trading laws. It was said in Ratners' defence that it had no deliberate intention of breaking the law but was merely responding to public demand.

JON ASHWORTH

SCOTTISH WIDOWS' FUND AND LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 177th Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Society will be held at the Head Office, 15 Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 7th May 1991 at 2.30pm for the following purposes:

To consider the Accounts and Balance Sheets for the year ended 31 December 1990 and the Reports of the Directors and Auditors.

To elect Directors

To appoint Auditors

To pass, if thought fit, the following Resolution recommended to the Members by the Directors:

"That the remuneration of the Auditors for the current year be fixed by the Directors of the Society."

To transact any other ordinary business proper to an Annual General Meeting.

Forms of Proxy for the use of Members of the Society who are unable to be present at the Meeting, but who wish to vote thereat, may be obtained on application to the undersigned. To be effective Proxies must reach the Society's Head Office not less than two clear working days before the time for holding the Meeting. A proxy need not be a member of the Society.

M D ROSS
MANAGING DIRECTOR
15 Dalkeith Road, EDINBURGH, EH16 5BU
2 April 1991

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For further information call Fergus Hooley or Paul Richardson on 071-831 2323.

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Central Londonc£31,000 + car
West London

FINANCIAL MANAGER

Restaurant Group
The restaurant division of a household name FMCG group is expanding via franchise development and acquisition. It now seeks a Qualified Accountant, 25-35, to perform business forecasts, analyse market trends and liaise with marketing personnel. Prospects exist for promotion to a US line-management role.

BUSINESS AUDIT

Food & Drink
If you have the potential to become a Financial Director for a division of a £3 billion FMCG group within two years and are aged 26-35, this is an outstanding opportunity. The brief will be to conduct a wide range of business audits on a Pan-European basis. You should have experience of either an audit function or line management.

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A graduate with excellent administrative skills and hands-on experience of PCs including spreadsheet and database packages, you should, ideally, have a chartered secretary

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Salary, in the range £19,000 to £21,500, is supported by excellent large-company benefits including profit sharing and sharesave schemes, 29 days' holiday, pension and relocation assistance if appropriate.

Please write with full cv, quoting reference SEC/13229/2477, to Miles Cunningham, Recruitment Administration, British Gas plc, Heron House, 326 High Holborn, London WC1V 7PT. Closing date for receipt of applications 9 May 1991.

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For further information contact Jill Davies or Christopher Kidd at Davies Kidd on 071-353 4112 (days) or 081-779 8140 or 081-779 8141 (evening and weekends). Alternatively write to them at the address below.

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Guardian Royal Exchange

Group Established 1720, assets exceed £12,500 million.

	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Market depressed

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began April 15. Dealings end tomorrow. Settlement day April 29. Settlement day May 7.
Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Portfolio
PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your daily dividend figure. If it matches the prize money stated on a share of the daily claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Close at 4.30
1	Pollard	Industrials L-R	100.00
2	Am New 2	Bank Discount	100.00
3	Regalton	Property	100.00
4	Woodside	Oil/Gas	100.00
5	Wickes	Discount Stores	100.00
6	Microfilm Repro	Electronics	100.00
7	Jardine Math	Industrials E-K	100.00
8	Wentac	Bank Discount	100.00
9	Starch (Wm)	Industrials S-Z	100.00
10	Brown (N)	Discount Stores	100.00
11	Nat Asset Rf	Bank Discount	100.00
12	ITW	Industrials A-D	100.00
13	Leaves	Electronics	100.00
14	AIM	Industrials A-D	100.00
15	BRP	Discount Stores	100.00
16	Ryl Rf Sec	Bank Discount	100.00
17	Nabco Gp	Industrials L-R	100.00
18	Barnes Group	Discount Stores	100.00
19	Olsson (M)	Building Roads	100.00
20	Brown Shipley	Bank Discount	100.00
21	PPG Hodgson	Industrials L-R	100.00
22	Tyne Tote TV	Leisure	100.00
23	Crown On Credit	Industrials A-D	100.00
24	Crown Virella	Discount Stores	100.00
25	BET Gm	Industrials A-D	100.00
26	Laporte	Discount Stores	100.00
27	Whitcomb	Industrials S-Z	100.00
28	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
29	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
30	Church	Discount Stores	100.00
31	Scott TV	Leisure	100.00
32	Security Serv	Industrials S-Z	100.00
33	Dixons Gp	Discount Stores	100.00
34	MY Holdings	Industrials L-R	100.00
35	Wry	Paper Print Adv	100.00
36	BNB Rm	Industrials S-Z	100.00
37	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
38	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
39	Fincham Wharfedale	Industrials E-K	100.00
40	Yorkville	Textiles	100.00
41	Harland Countryd	Property	100.00
42	MSC	Property	100.00
43	Allied Lon	Property	100.00
44	David & Newton	Transport	100.00
© Times Newspapers Ltd. Daily Total			

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend						
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £4,000 in Saturday's newspaper.						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	TOTAL

The £4,000 Portfolio Platinum prize was won yesterday by Mrs Elizabeth Riddell, of Alton, Hampshire.

BRITISH FUNDS

1990/91 High Low Stock Price Change

SHORTS (Under Five Years)

Company	High	Low	Change
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00

FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS

Company	High	Low	Change
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS

Company	High	Low	Change
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00
Am New 2	100.00	100.00	0.00

UNDATED

INDEX-LINKED

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

ELECTRICALS

HOTELS, CATERERS

INDUSTRIALS A-D

INDUSTRIALS E-K

INDUSTRIALS L-R

INDUSTRIALS S-Z

LEISURE

MINING

MOTORCARS, AIRCRAFT

NEWSPAPERS, PUBLISHERS

OILS, GAS

PAPER, PRINT, ADVERTISING

PROPERTY

SHOES, LEATHER

TEXTILES

TOBACCOS

TRANSPORT

WATER

Portfolio
PLATINUM

© Times Newspapers Limited
DAILY DIVIDEND
£2,000

Claims required for +27 points

Claimants should ring 0254-53272

No.	Company	Group	Close at 4.30
1	Pollard	Industrials L-R	100.00
2	Am New 2	Bank Discount	100.00
3	Regalton	Property	100.00
4	Woodside	Oil/Gas	100.00
5	Wickes	Discount Stores	100.00
6	Microfilm Repro	Electronics	100.00
7	Jardine Math	Industrials E-K	100.00
8	Wentac	Bank Discount	100.00
9	Starch (Wm)	Industrials S-Z	100.00
10	Brown (N)	Discount Stores	100.00
11	Nat Asset Rf	Bank Discount	100.00
12	ITW	Industrials A-D	100.00
13	Leaves	Electronics	100.00
14	AIM	Industrials A-D	100.00
15	BRP	Discount Stores	100.00
16	Ryl Rf Sec	Bank Discount	100.00
17	Nabco Gp	Industrials L-R	100.00
18	Barnes Group	Discount Stores	100.00
19	Olsson (M)	Building Roads	100.00
20	Brown Shipley	Bank Discount	100.00
21	PPG Hodgson	Industrials L-R	100.00
22	Tyne Tote TV	Leisure	100.00
23	Crown On Credit	Industrials A-D	100.00
24	Crown Virella	Discount Stores	100.00
25	BET Gm	Industrials A-D	100.00
26	Laporte	Discount Stores	100.00
27	Whitcomb	Industrials S-Z	100.00
28	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
29	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
30	Church	Discount Stores	100.00
31	Scott TV	Leisure	100.00
32	Security Serv	Industrials S-Z	100.00
33	Dixons Gp	Discount Stores	100.00
34	MY Holdings	Industrials L-R	100.00
35	Wry	Paper Print Adv	100.00
36	BNB Rm	Industrials S-Z	100.00
37	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
38	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
39	Fincham Wharfedale	Industrials E-K	100.00
40	Yorkville	Textiles	100.00
41	Harland Countryd	Property	100.00
42	MSC	Property	100.00
43	Allied Lon	Property	100.00
44	David & Newton	Transport	100.00
© Times Newspapers Ltd. Daily Total			

PAPER, PRINT, ADVERTISING

No.	Company	Group	Close at 4.30
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15	BRP	Discount Stores	100.00
16	Ryl Rf Sec	Bank Discount	100.00
17	Nabco Gp	Industrials L-R	100.00
18	Barnes Group	Discount Stores	100.00
19	Olsson (M)	Building Roads	100.00
20	Brown Shipley	Bank Discount	100.00
21	PPG Hodgson	Industrials L-R	100.00
22	Tyne Tote TV	Leisure	100.00
23	Crown On Credit	Industrials A-D	100.00
24	Crown Virella	Discount Stores	100.00
25	BET Gm	Industrials A-D	100.00
26	Laporte	Discount Stores	100.00
27	Whitcomb	Industrials S-Z	100.00
28	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
29	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
30	Church	Discount Stores	100.00
31	Scott TV	Leisure	100.00
32	Security Serv	Industrials S-Z	100.00
33	Dixons Gp	Discount Stores	100.00
34	MY Holdings	Industrials L-R	100.00
35	Wry	Paper Print Adv	100.00
36	BNB Rm	Industrials S-Z	100.00
37	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
38	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
39	Fincham Wharfedale	Industrials E-K	100.00
40	Yorkville	Textiles	100.00
41	Harland Countryd	Property	100.00
42	MSC	Property	100.00
43	Allied Lon	Property	100.00
44	David & Newton	Transport	100.00
© Times Newspapers Ltd. Daily Total			

PROPERTY

No.	Company	Group	Close at 4.30
1	Pollard	Industrials L-R	100.00
2	Am New 2	Bank Discount	100.00
3	Regalton	Property	100.00
4	Woodside	Oil/Gas	100.00
5	Wickes	Discount Stores	100.00
6	Microfilm Repro	Electronics	100.00
7	Jardine Math	Industrials E-K	100.00
8	Wentac	Bank Discount	100.00
9	Starch (Wm)	Industrials S-Z	100.00
10	Brown (N)	Discount Stores	100.00
11	Nat Asset Rf	Bank Discount	100.00
12	ITW	Industrials A-D	100.00
13	Leaves	Electronics	100.00
14	AIM	Industrials A-D	100.00
15	BRP	Discount Stores	100.00
16	Ryl Rf Sec	Bank Discount	100.00
17	Nabco Gp	Industrials L-R	100.00
18	Barnes Group	Discount Stores	100.00
19	Olsson (M)	Building Roads	100.00
20	Brown Shipley	Bank Discount	100.00
21	PPG Hodgson	Industrials L-R	100.00
22	Tyne Tote TV	Leisure	100.00
23	Crown On Credit	Industrials A-D	100.00
24	Crown Virella	Discount Stores	100.00
25	BET Gm	Industrials A-D	100.00
26	Laporte	Discount Stores	100.00
27	Whitcomb	Industrials S-Z	100.00
28	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
29	Tanaka	Industrials S-Z	100.00
30	Church	Discount Stores	100.00
31	Scott TV	Leisure	100.00
32	Security Serv	Industrials S-Z	100.00
33	Dixons Gp	Discount Stores	100.00
34	MY Holdings	Industrials L-R	100.00
35	Wry	Paper Print Adv	100.00
36	BNB Rm	Industrials S-Z	100.00
37	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
38	East	Paper Print Adv	100.00
39	Fincham Wharfedale	Industrials E-K	100.00
40	Yorkville	Textiles	100.00
41	Harland Countryd	Property	100.00
42	MSC	Property	100.00
43	Allied Lon	Property	100.00
44	David & Newton	Transport	100.00
© Times Newspapers Ltd. Daily Total			

SHOES, LEATHER

26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
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RACING

Walwyn's colt may yet run in Guineas

By RICHARD EVANS

MUKADDAMAH and Dantrey may still line up for the 2,000 and 1,000 Guineas respectively at Newmarket next week.

The will-be, won't-be runner in the two well-backed classic contenders took a new twist yesterday following optimistic reports from Peter Walwyn and Michael Stoute.

Mukaddamah, a disappointing second behind Bog Trotter in the Greenham Stakes at Newbury last Saturday, has recovered well from the race despite losing 21 kilos.

"It is not my decision, but it was, he would probably run," Walwyn said at Kempton yesterday before flying back to Lambourn with Sheikh Hamdan Al-Maktoum, owner of the one-time favourite for the colt's classic.

"The horse has done well and put on nine kilos of the weight he lost. I would be very happy to run him. I am going back to see Sheikh Hamdan in the helicopter to look at his horse and discuss it all. We still think he is a good horse."

Angus Gold, racing manager to Sheikh Hamdan, said: "If the horse is well and Peter wants to run him, I am sure Sheikh Hamdan will let him run."

Stoute feared that the recent cold snap had hampered his chances of getting Dantrey ready in time for the 1,000 Guineas next Thursday, but the owner of the Ch So Shire Stakes at Newmarket last October, on her only racecourse appearance, worked impressively yesterday morning and prompted speculation that she will run in the fillies' race.

Stoute will make a decision today after consulting Anthony Stroud, racing manager to Sheikh Mohammed. "She worked well and I was pleased with her," the trainer said.

Shadyaid, the odds-on favourite for the 1,000 Guineas, is unlikely to have a pacemaker as originally planned by Sheikh Hamdan and trained by Tom Jones, had been pencilled in but will not be ready in time.

Wakashan, a best priced 33-1 for the Ever Ready Stakes following an impressive win at Newmarket last week, will miss the Thresher Classic Trial at Sandown on Saturday following a minor setback.

"He has pulled a muscle and will be off work for a few days. It does not seem to be anything too serious but Sandown is out. He has plenty of other engagements," a spokeswoman for Henry Cecil said.

With Sumner expected to bypass the classic trial in favour of a graduation race at Sandown tomorrow, Jaffari is likely to be the market leader in the first recognised test for Derby contenders.

Major Hain has won the race with Bustino, Troy and Henbit and, interestingly, Jaffari was heavily backed for the Epsom classic with Corals yesterday, including one bet of £1,000 each-way at 2-1.

In spite of winning the Blue Riband Trial Stakes, the feature race on the second day of Kempton's spring meeting, Fair Average would appear to be suitably named if judged by the remarks of his trainer, Henry Candy.

While some handlers would have outlined optimistic future racing plans for such a winner, Candy adopted a refreshingly low key approach.

"I don't think he is anything fantastic. He is just an ordinary, good horse who is quite useful in soft ground," he said.

Walter Swinburn provided a welcome tonic for his mother, Doreen, who came out of hospital on Sunday, by winning the Spring Meeting Fillies Handicap on Possessive Dancer, which is owned by her.

Local Whisper makes all to land gamble

LOCAL Whisper backed down to 0-4 favourite in yesterday's £120,000 Tattersall's Gold Cup at Puncethurst, landed the gamble when making all to hold off Firiros Law by a head (Orie's Racing Correspondent writes).

Formerly trained at Whitbury by David Elsworth, he raced yesterday for the seven-year stable of Arthur Bunyan and credited with the biggest win of his career.

Today, there could be another British triumph as the Herefordshire trainer Paul James challenges with New Haven for the £120,000 John P. Harty Memorial Handicap Chase.

New Haven appears to have been leniently treated by the Irish handicapper, racing off 10st 10lb. Not out was New Haven very much in contention when unseating his rider at the 23rd fence in the Aintree Grand National, but he had run good races when third in the Mackeson Gold Cup and fifth in the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup.

Matches played 20th April 1991

LITTLEWOODS POOLS LIVERPOOL

THIS WEEK'S PAYOUT OF OVER **£3.4 MILLION**

187 TOP WINNERS OF OVER **£9,700**

5 TOP WINNERS OF OVER **£87,500**

TREBLE CHANCE PAYING 6 DIVIDENDS

24 PTS £9,723.80

22 PTS £197.55

23 PTS £127.70

22 PTS £125.25

21 PTS £75.50

21 PTS £22.10

Table shows dividends in units of 1p.

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CRICKET

Hooper leads the breakthrough to sensational victory

From JOHN WOODCOCK IN BRIDGETOWN.

THE fourth Test match, and the series with it, was won sensationally by West Indies here yesterday. In 11.1 overs and 51 minutes after lunch Australia lost their last six wickets for 18 runs, their collapse being started, ironically enough, not by one of West Indies' quartet of fast bowlers, but by Hooper, bowling his little off breaks even when there was a new ball available.

West Indies won by 343 runs, yet when the players came out for the afternoon session Australia seemed appreciably closer to survival than they had at the start of play. As the morning wore on, Richards had good reason to wonder about his bewilderingly cautious declaration of the day before. Taylor had shown such concentration had any of his predecessors among Australia's opening batsmen would have admired, and after a nervous start Jones was beginning to play the game much more on his own terms.

Then, suddenly, Australia's resistance was broken.

Just before lunch Richards had resorted to a spin, a pointer to how much pace the pitch had lost, and in the first over afterwards Jones played on to Hooper. By the time Jones realised that his forward defensive prop was spinning back towards the stumps it was too late for him to intercept it, desperately as he

tried. With the ball turning out of one of Marshall's treacherous footmarks, Taylor found himself with a new and unexpected problem.

But it was Mark Waugh who went next, all at sixes and sevens to Hooper and bowled by the arm ball. That was in the 84th over of Australia's innings. In the 85th Taylor was leg before to an out and out shooter and sent most ungraciously on his way by Marshall, and Healy was also leg before, though to a ball which he thought he had hit. In the 86th over, bowled by Walsh, it was all done. Roland Holder substituting for Greenidge, taking a flying catch in the gully to account for McDermott and Reid being bowled.

For the first time in the match there was rain about, which the Australians had hoped would help their cause. There had been some heavy showers in the night and a sprinkle delayed the start by five minutes. But Hughes, the night watchman, was very soon gone, caught down the legside, hooking aimlessly at Marshall. This was Marshall's 350th Test wicket, nearly 100 more than any of the other great West Indian speed merchants. Ahead of him now are only Hadlee (431), Kapil Dev and Botham (both 376), Imran Khan (362) and Lillee (355).

He will have Lillee in his

sights in Antigua later this week, and three of the other four in England this summer. Taylor should have followed Hughes. Driving too soon at Ambrose he was left off by Richardson at silly mid-off. Just as Taylor had mistimed the stroke, so Richardson mistimed the catch.

There is no safer pair of hands in the game than Richardson, but he had now put Taylor down twice. It was Taylor's only mistake of the morning. Jones, too, went quite confidently into lunch. His early anxieties behind him, if the odds still favoured West Indies the manner in which they went on to retain the Frank Worrell Trophy was surprising even by their standards.

WEST INDIES: First innings 148 (M G Hughes 4 for 44, C D Walcott 2 for 28, C L Hooper 57, M E Waugh 59-40-40).

AUSTRALIA: First innings 184 (C A Walsh 4 for 14).

Second innings

G R Marsh 4 for 44, C D Walcott 2 for 28, C L Hooper 57, M E Waugh 59-40-40.

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 184 (C A Walsh 4 for 14).

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-11, 2-11, 3-11, 4-11, 5-11, 6-11, 7-11, 8-11, 9-11, 10-11, 11-11, 12-11, 13-11, 14-11, 15-11, 16-11, 17-11, 18-11, 19-11, 20-11, 21-11, 22-11, 23-11, 24-11, 25-11, 26-11, 27-11, 28-11, 29-11, 30-11, 31-11, 32-11, 33-11, 34-11, 35-11, 36-11, 37-11, 38-11, 39-11, 40-11, 41-11, 42-11, 43-11, 44-11, 45-11, 46-11, 47-11, 48-11, 49-11, 50-11, 51-11, 52-11, 53-11, 54-11, 55-11, 56-11, 57-11, 58-11, 59-11, 60-11, 61-11, 62-11, 63-11, 64-11, 65-11, 66-11, 67-11, 68-11, 69-11, 70-11, 71-11, 72-11, 73-11, 74-11, 75-11, 76-11, 77-11, 78-11, 79-11, 80-11, 81-11, 82-11, 83-11, 84-11, 85-11, 86-11, 87-11, 88-11, 89-11, 90-11, 91-11, 92-11, 93-11, 94-11, 95-11, 96-11, 97-11, 98-11, 99-11, 100-11, 101-11, 102-11, 103-11, 104-11, 105-11, 106-11, 107-11, 108-11, 109-11, 110-11, 111-11, 112-11, 113-11, 114-11, 115-11, 116-11, 117-11, 118-11, 119-11, 120-11, 121-11, 122-11, 123-11, 124-11, 125-11, 126-11, 127-11, 128-11, 129-11, 130-11, 131-11, 132-11, 133-11, 134-11, 135-11, 136-11, 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SPORT

Britain must back Manchester to Olympic hilt

By DAVID MILLER

WHOEVER is prime minister in 1993, he will be wise to recognise the social and economic, as well as political value, of giving the maximum support to Britain's bid — via the city of Manchester — for the Olympic Games of 2000.

It is commendable that representatives of the British Olympic Association dismissed the doubts about maintaining a British presence in the Olympic bidding ring. The priority now, given the unanimity of the people of the north-west, and the unanimity of the BOA, is the unanimity of the country behind Manchester.

It is essential that, far more than was made evident by Mrs Thatcher's government last year, during the vote in Tokyo for the Games of 1996, that Manchester is seen to be the



choice of Britain, of the government and of the BOA itself. In the regeneration of Britain's nineteenth-century industrial areas, the Olympic Games can be an emotional and practical catalyst exceeding the power of any other social force. Ask Seoul. Ask Barcelona. If the conservatives retain power, central government support is likely to be substantial. There is a more sports-orientated cabinet than at any time in history, non-Olympic cricket excluded.

For the next two years, every embassy around the world, every government representative travelling overseas, should be briefed to promote, where appropriate, the competence and ideology of the Manchester bid of what Britain can give to the Olympic Games, as it has done twice before.

Not give back to the Games, as Birmingham's bid five years ago slightly offensively offered, thereby suggesting that someone had taken the Games away from the athletes; but give in the truest sense of traditional British sport.

The country must be behind Manchester from today, so that no International Olympic Committee member, no international sports federation, no multi-national Olympic sponsor — now providing half the financial Olympic cake — can doubt that, if appointed in

1993, Manchester will have none of the anxieties that discredited the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh and which undermine this year's World Student Games in Sheffield.

The world must be told from the start that Manchester, creating state-of-the-art facilities for almost every sport bar football, will be a spectacular success.

Contrary to misinformation being put about beforehand, Chris Patten, sent by Mrs Thatcher to Tokyo and left open-mouthed in awe at the dimensions of the negotiating battle he witnessed, was unequivocal in his private support for the continuation of Manchester's bid; an opinion he could not voice until the BOA had taken its domestic decision.

The proportional benefit to the government of regeneration in the North West,

primed by public investment but effected by 90 per cent private investment, is substantially greater than it would be in London, as John Glesler, chief executive of the Central Manchester Development Corporation, explained yesterday.

It is questionable whether the public investment in infrastructure for London Docks Development would be able to keep pace, in road and rail construction, sufficiently to have allowed a London Olympics to have worked in the way that was claimed.

Yesterday's presentations were, in the words of Dick Palmer, general secretary of the BOA, like chalk and cheese. Manchester, confining itself to meeting BOA's specific terms of reference, was compact and factual. The Duke of Westminster talked of the £20 billion redevelopment programme and 300,000



Winning bid: Bob Scott put Manchester's case

employees that give a platform to Manchester's optimism. Graham Stringer, leader of Manchester city council, unhesitatingly said: "We will deliver."

Corporation, a progressive operation "second to none in the UK". Gil Thompson, chief executive of Manchester Airport, tellingly talked of the north-west's accessibility, through a modern airport and extensive motorway network that will give freedom of movement even for the overseas day visitor.

This was in stark contrast to London, all too familiar to IOC members, whom London coyly claimed would necessarily prefer the attractions of the capital.

Manchester, in response to the BOA's demand for a minimum of three new sports facilities, irrespective of success in 1993, promised eight and the possibility of five others.

London's presentation was a sorry affair and explains why it received fewer than half a dozen votes. Its optimistic claims did not bear examina-

tion; and the lack of a central authority pulled the rug from under the hyperbole.

Robert Dean, one of the BOA's investigators, knew the realities, and the limits of the Docklands project, while London's financial claims for profit over costs were grossly exaggerated for those knowing the facts; quite out of proportion to Barcelona's figures, for example.

London's claim to be sports-generated for sport, originating from the CCPR, never had a chance of overtaking Manchester's knowledge, experience and practicality.

Sebastian Coe's motives had been the best, his credentials were unimpeachable, but when he said on television that his political career came first there were BOA members who wondered — about the depth of the London application.

Milan's appeal rejected by Uefa

GENEVA — The appeals board of the European Football Union (Uefa) has upheld a one-season ban from all European club competitions on AC Milan.

Uefa's control and disciplinary committee had awarded the European Cup quarter-final second leg tie on March 20 to Marseille for forfeit 3-0 because the Italian club's players had walked off the pitch when the floodlights failed with Marseille leading 1-0.

The AC Milan delegation, headed by the Italian television media magnate, Silvio Berlusconi, pleaded for mitigation in a two-hour session with the appeals board. But after hearing evidence from the referee and its match delegate, the appeals board deliberated for a further two hours before dismissing the appeal.

"The sanction is disproportionate," Berlusconi said. He said Milan left the field because photographers and other unauthorized people, thinking the game was over, invaded the pitch after Swedish referee Bo Karlsson interrupted play because of the light problem. "How can you imagine finishing a game regularly in such confusion?" he said.

Marseille was leading 1-0 at the time, enough to reach the semi-finals after 1-1 draw in the first leg.

Uefa also rejected appeals by Montpellier against the suspension of two players sent off during the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final defeat against Manchester United.

Jean-Manuel Thetis will remain banned for five games for spitting at Mark Hughes in the second leg while Pascal Bailly had his three-match ban confirmed for elbowing Hughes in the face during the first leg at Old Trafford.

Venglos's days at Aston Villa look numbered

By DENNIS SHAW

JOZEF Venglos's future as the manager of Aston Villa will be sharply scrutinised at the end of the football season. His most likely option will be to return home to Czechoslovakia. Although the chairman, Doug Ellis, is not publicly committing himself to a decision, the pressure for a second change in 12 months may be too intense for him to resist.

When the Villa chairman took the bold gamble to introduce Venglos after Graham Taylor became manager of England, a possible relegation fight never entered his thinking. Ellis thought more in terms of Continental innovation and consolidating a place among the top six teams in the first division.

Yet now, with three fixtures remaining, Villa still need two points to be certain of avoiding a place in the bottom two. This is a disastrous state of affairs for an ambitious club that was contesting the championship 12 months ago.

Successful home defeats by Wimbledon and Manchester City, who beat them 5-1 on Tuesday night, have produced a public demand for new team leadership. The Villa chairman has to acknowledge that while Venglos has a distinguished record in European

terms, he has not adequately come to grips with the special demands of the English first division.

There is a weakness in communication which makes it impossible for Venglos to probe beneath the surface of any subject. The media feel this profoundly. It is even more serious with players.

This comprehension gap could explain why players who, under Taylor, were above Arsenal and chasing Liverpool, have conceded 18 of the last 21 points. Ellis's refusal on television to commit himself to the second year of Venglos's contract looks significant.

That second year was awarded by Ellis, seemingly on an impulse, only five months ago after the highly impressive home win over Inter Milan in the Uefa Cup. Now the chances are that the original one-year experiment, plus a settlement, will be brought into play.

Venglos has endeared himself to all with his courteous goodwill, but his difficulty in discussing above the level of the obvious, his reluctance to criticise or even disagree fit uneasily into the rugged new world he has joined.

Venglos said that, in terms of results, he could not turn

"bad luck into good luck". He added: "I accept the criticism of fans but I would rather be judged after the next three results. I am confident we are good enough to stand up. I have never before been involved in a relegation situation."

Ellis yesterday confirmed his refusal to discuss Venglos's future beyond the final game. "We are all terribly disappointed at recent results but I am quietly confident we will get the necessary points to remain in the first division," he said. "But when you are losing match after match you wonder whether the players have the confidence."

"The manager will, without question, be here for the next three matches. I am not going to speak about what happens after that." Speculation is rife about who would replace Venglos, with Bruce Rioch, Arthur Cox and Gerry Francis among the favourites.

Last night Ellis refused to give Venglos a long-term vote of confidence. Asked whether he would still be manager next season, Ellis replied: "I am not going to speak about that now. The manager and the board will talk about it at the end of the season."

Ellis admitted to being "very concerned and disappointed" at Villa's demise.

Laudrup's refusal to play for Denmark

BELGRADE (Reuters) — Brian Laudrup, the Bayern Munich forward, said yesterday that he and his brother, Michael, who plays for Barcelona, would refuse to appear for the Danish national football team unless Richard Møller Nielsen, the coach, resigned.

"We had a huge row with Nielsen some time ago and relations have deteriorated quite dramatically recently," Laudrup, who was in Belgrade for Bayern's European Cup semi-final second leg with Red Star Belgrade, said. "We think he is not competent to coach Denmark, and will not play until he quits."

Laudrup claimed Nielsen had ruined Denmark's chances of qualifying for the European championship

finals in Sweden next year. Denmark have three points from three qualifying matches in group four and trail Yugoslavia, the group leaders, by five points.

□ Arsenal's exhibition match against Liverpool, their first division championship rivals, in Singapore, will be played on May 17, which should prove good news for Graham Taylor, the England manager.

The match was originally pencilled in for the end of May, which would have meant players missing England's summer tour to Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia. They should now be available for the trip as well as for the international matches against the Soviet Union and Argentina at Wembley.



Fighting innings: Mark Taylor, the Australian opener, sweeps a ball from Carl Hooper during his valiant but vain effort to save his side from defeat by West Indies in the fourth Test match at Bridgetown. Report, page 30

McManus causes an upset

By STEVE ACTESON

ALAN McManus, who sprang one of the surprises of the season, his first as a professional, when he beat Jimmy White in the United Kingdom

championship, stole the limelight again yesterday on snooker's most nerve-jangling stage of all. It was in the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, that he defeated the eleventh seed, Willie Thorne, 10-8 in the first round of the world championship.

McManus, conceded Thorne, the best of the new breed and the bookmakers think so too. While raising Thorne as only 100-1 for the title, they have posted the Scot, aged 20, from Glasgow at 50-1.

Thorne, aged 37, had needed to win to stay in the top 16 for the eighth successive year. His failure to do so will cost him more than £20,000 for he will now be excluded from next season's lucrative invitational events.

Thorne sowed the seeds for his defeat in the first session on

Tuesday from which he emerged 5-4 in arrears, having lost his nerve and the last three frames.

Yesterday he rallied to lead 7-6, aided by breaks of 91, 67, and 49 but McManus remained with runs of 77 and 65 and then moved to within a frame of victory by doubling the final brown in the sixteenth frame.

McManus added a run of 90 two frames later to secure his place in the last 16 against Terry Griffiths, the 1979 winner, of whom he said: "He has always been one of my heroes and I must show him a lot of respect but I feel I can only go from strength to strength."

Thorne said: "To go out of the top 16 is soul-destroying. There is no money to be made from snooker in the summer but I'll have to find some work somewhere. I'm about to lose my house, I'm about to lose everything."

"Alan is a good player but he had two flukes today, one yesterday and doubled the

brown to win another frame."

Thorne estimates that he earned almost £1 million in prize-money in five years with Barry Hearn's Matchroom stable, which he left last year.

John Parrott, the third seed, overcame unexpectedly stiff resistance to defeat Nigel Gilbert by 10-6 to earn a second round meeting with Tony Knowles, ranked eighth, is 5-4 down overnight to Robert Marshall, another qualifier.

RESULTS: M. Clark (Eng) bt M. Bennett (Wales) 10-6. Frame scores (Clark best): 9-75, 75-0, 65-27, 72-0, 71-30, 75-0, 10-61, 67-14, 78-0, 44-22, 57-2, 11-2, 62-61, 69-12. G. Wilson (Eng) leads D. Naudy (Wales) 8-1. Frame scores (Wilson best): 10-69, 24-73, 40-78, 9-12, 28-78, 48-65, 48-61, 74-1, 6-78. A. McManus (Scot) leads W. Thorne (Scot) 5-4. Frame scores (Thorne best): 32-78, 75-27, 78-34, 28-78, 54-15, 65-72, 61-76, 68-1. J. Parrott (Eng) leads N. Gilbert (Scot) 5-3. Frame scores (Parrott best): 62-22, 15-64, 69-21, 10-10, 47-72, 55-0, 55-68, 75-41, 10-1. A. McManus (Scot) bt W. Thorne (Scot) 10-8. Frame scores (Thorne best): 33-78, 75-27, 75-4, 23-75, 33-4, 75-15, 65-72, 6-1, 91, 10-20, 33-25, 75-0, 69-40, 22-63, 25-27, 35-68, 77-40, 29-56.

Hanley's cup date in doubt

By KEITH MACKLIN

WITH the Silk Cut rugby league cup final only two days away, Ellery Hanley has not yet trained with Wigan this week because of a hamstring injury. "Time seems to be running out for Ellery," the coach, John Monie, said yesterday. "However, with such a great player, who plays almost by instinct, I will wait until the last minute, even Saturday morning, before making a decision."

"If it comes to that, I will give him a run out on Saturday morning. If he runs, he plays. If he pulls up, he's out."

Andy Goodway stands by to replace Hanley.

Joe Lydon is Wigan's other serious doubt, and David Myers is ready to deputise on the wing.

A chance for government to act with integrity

By TOM PENDRY

AS ONE who led the first demonstration against a touring South African cricket side, over 25 years ago, I have been acutely aware of the powerful effect the sporting boycott against South Africa has had in maintaining pressure on the Pretoria regime and helping to bring about positive change within sport there. Indeed, few could argue that it has not been one of the most effective and sustained campaigns the international community has ever mounted.

So the news that the administration of South African cricket is to be formally unified by the end of June is to be welcomed by all sports lovers. Coming on top of other significant breakthroughs, such as the International Olympic Committee's recognition of the Interim National Olympic Committee of South Africa, it provides further evidence that the long-cherished goal of truly non-racial South Af-

rican teams participating in international competition is within our grasp. The South African sporting bodies deserve every congratulations on the remarkable progress made so far.

However, with that goal in sight, it would be sheer folly to allow premature haste in the United Kingdom to undermine that progress. The sporting bodies in South Africa are entering now the most difficult and complicated phase of discussions to implement the necessary changes in accordance with the Olympic Charter, within the 180-day period laid down by the IOC.

Britain, especially, must act with extreme caution throughout this period. For over a decade the United Kingdom has been perceived by the rest of the world as being both soft on apartheid and soft

on the sporting boycott on South Africa. On international platforms from the European Community and Council of Europe to the Commonwealth head of government meetings, Britain has isolated itself by refusing to make an unconditional condemnation of apartheid or to pledge full commitment to United Nations policy on South Africa. Glenageles has held — but only just. Meanwhile, the rest of the world has watched and taken note.

Most importantly, I argue that, as the IOC itself has recognised, the non-racial sporting bodies alone can be the judge or the arbiter of when change in South Africa is sufficiently advanced for it to be readmitted to world competition.

It would be rightly perceived by the African sporting bodies as both arrogant and insensitive of John Major to imagine that his government can have anything other than a spectator role in this difficult decision. The emphasis of British

statements or comment should be confined to support for the processes of racial integration within sport in South Africa.

That is not to say that positive work cannot go on in anticipation of the day for South Africa's readmission. For the new South Africa, almost totally isolated from world sporting contact for a quarter of a century, will be in dire need of sporting expertise; expertise in areas where Britain is at the forefront in coaching and coach education, facility development and programmes for disadvantaged groups.

In particular, the government should take President de Klerk's visit as an opportunity to announce a substantial aid programme not only to South African sport but also to those front-line states whose competitive sports structures have been substantially weakened by their principled stand on the boy-

cott. This would provide convincing proof of the efficacy of using sport as aid projects to bring about positive and long-lasting benefits to recipient countries.

I look forward to seeing South African cricket, rugby and athletic prowess gracing the international scene — but only when its teams have been totally freed from the tainted hands of apartheid and, most crucially, have gained the acceptance of all African sport.

As for Britain, this could well be the government's last chance as far as the sports boycott is concerned to act with integrity and policy. Other European and Commonwealth countries are already preparing sports aid programmes for South Africa. Britain must do the same. □ Tom Pendry is Labour MP for Stalybridge and Hyde and chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party sports committee.

ALLIES threaten Iraq get on in

THE United States, Britain and France have told Baghdad that it has until September to get its security forces out of the town of Kuwait, or they will launch a military operation to remove them. The allies said they did not want to have the authority to make the decision to make certain necessary to achieve our objectives. There's no question that we would prevail. The United States and the United Kingdom are now 750 miles from the Turkish border and 100 miles from Iraq. The 15-point ultimatum was delivered to the Iraqi ambassador in the United States. The ultimatum said the allies must start leaving the power at Amman this morning. London time, and that the operation must be

TODAY IN THE TIMES

INTERVIEW

Kate Moss talks to the author of the book 'The Girl on the Train' by Rachel Watson. Moss brought her own experience of addiction and her own story to the book. Page 19

BEHAVIOUR

Tom Clares on what happened to the Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke of Edinburgh called in to discuss the decline of his play. Page 44

LETTERS

General Colin Powell has provoked plenty of letters over the way to pronounce his first name. Today, the General pronounces. Page 23

INSIDE

Parking threat

A Labour government would make some parking offences enforceable and drivers would have to pay to park. The party's transport spokesman said yesterday. Page 1

Health plan

Leaked government plans for a health strategy for England which includes targets to cut heart disease, strokes and cancer, were attacked by Labour. Page 2

Iraqi 'plot'

A managing director with dual British and Iraqi nationality masterminded a plan to export detonating devices for nuclear bombs to the Middle East because he wanted to help Iraq. The Central Criminal Court was told. Page 1

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The Best of Both Worlds.

Desktops everywhere are converting to UNIX. No longer a black art practised by men in white coats, today UNIX is child's play and is used in everyday business applications.

Even so, people like familiar things. DOS will continue to run for years to come and few want to kick the habit.

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